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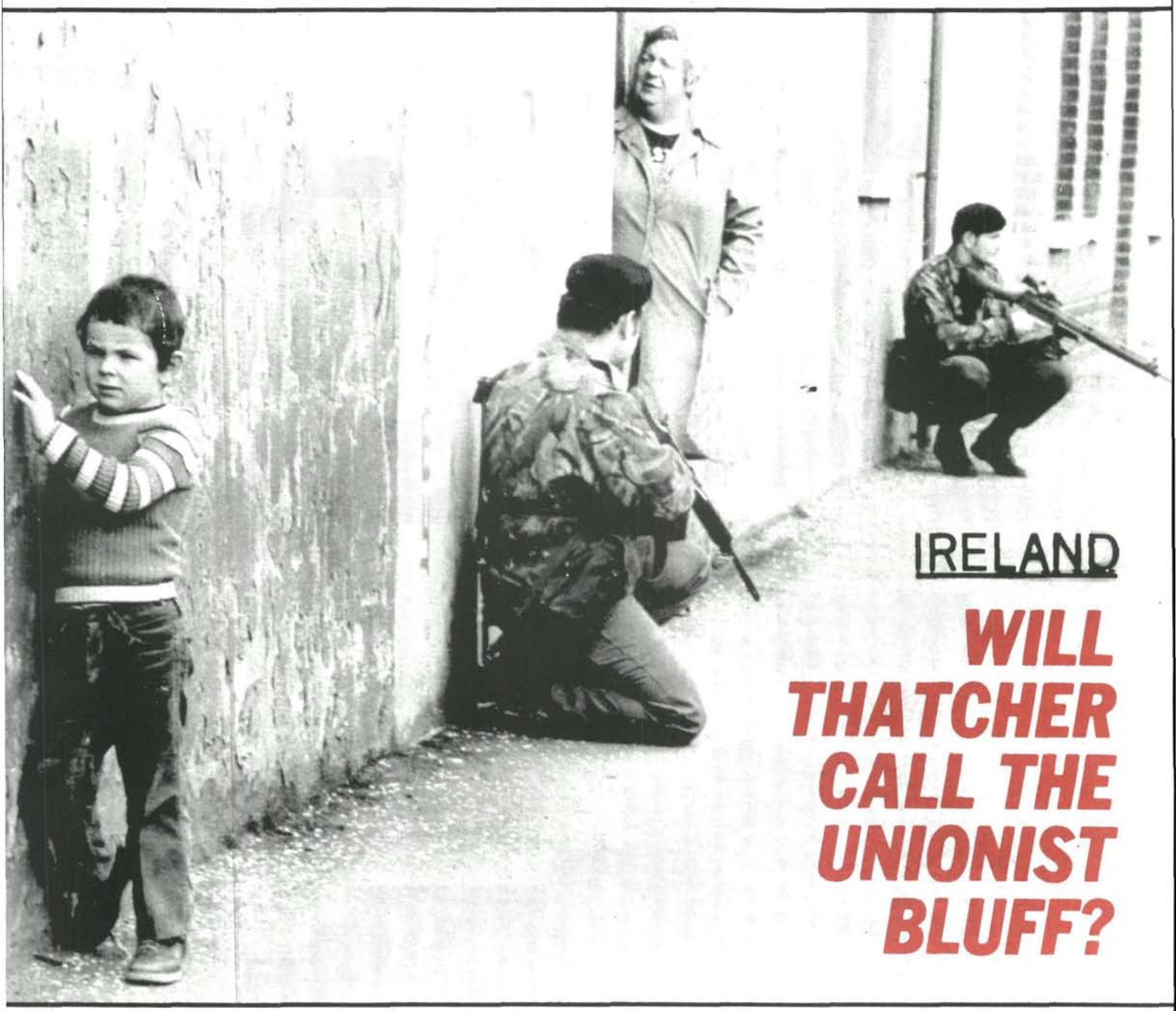

IRELAND

WILL THATCHER CALL THE UNIONIST BLUFF?

SARAH BENTON: Paddy Ashdown's climb-down

HARRIETT GILBERT: The joy of writing

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF: Uses of torture

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AUTUMN BOOKS ISSUE

With GLYN HUGHES, writer in residence at Eastwood, Notts, reflecting on the Lawrence centenary and the crop of critical assessments it's spawned; MICHAEL LEAPMAN on Jan Morris; BERNARD PADDEN on Kenneth Williams; a double dose of fiction reviews; two-page Autumn books list and much, much more

COLD WAR NEWS

GREG PHILO changed our perceptions of how the news works with his Glasgow Media group analysis of news broadcasts. Now he turns his attentions to how television reports defence and the USSR

We know that the Ayatollah is one, but is Pope John Paul II also a religious fundamentalist? Yes, says T.M. PASCA, previewing the coming special synod

ANNA COOTE reveals Labour's plans for a new Ministry of Women

New Statesman

Vol 110 No 2843 20 September 1985

There is no special relationship

THREE YEARS ago Mrs Thatcher gave President Reagan a present. It was an enamelled music box, decorated with a scene from Gilbert and Sullivan's *Gondoliers*. It plays 'Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes'.

The whole thing captures very well the tone of what the Prime Minister regards as her 'special relationship' with the current President of the United States. She was then still bathing in the afterglow of the Falklands, which would not logistically have been possible without a great deal of clandestine US support.

Three years later even Mrs Thatcher must have come to the conclusion that the special relationship is a very one way street. The pretence that it is otherwise has been variously maintained by British politicians, by Whitehall civil servants, by our armed forces, above all by our secret services, in order to have a basis for pretending to a greater say in world affairs than the governments of other more successful societies with more effective economies. It is a posture that gets up a lot of foreign people's noses.

What Mrs Thatcher has, of course, discovered is that President Reagan in no sense runs the American government. He represents a set of political parameters and has chosen the style in which the resulting policies are presented. But those in the White House, the Pentagon and the CIA (and still to a limited extent the State Department) who decide on American foreign and military policy certainly do not think in terms of any special relationship with London.

Washington did not bother to consult London, or even inform London in advance, when it invaded Grenada. It has not consulted, and only just barely informed in advance, any of its allies over its approach to the Geneva arms talks or the Star Wars project. Towards all its supposed allies, indeed, the United States under the Reagan Administration has adopted an approach of bullying insensitively. The State of Israel alone seems to have the political capacity to demand and get virtually unqualified American support for anything it chooses to do.

Pursuit of a special relationship with Washington which does not exist is increasingly damaging to British national interests. The last two issues of the *New Statesman* have revealed secret concessions to American military demands in this country that go beyond anything ever before experienced in peace time in any NATO country and involve de facto limitations of sovereignty. These come on top of informal arrangements with the Americans which go back to 1946, which in themselves were without precedent elsewhere in Europe. The wartime Roosevelt-Churchill relationship, which was no doubt in Mrs Thatcher's mind when she selected her music box, in practice turned almost at once into one of owner and lap dog.

For the United States, the United Kingdom is a convenient, until now politically stable and English-speaking base for its European operations — and, despite many warm personal relationships, when the chips are down it is very little else.

Lap dogs only get scraps

Star Wars is a paradigm of this special relationship. To give the Prime Minister her due, she did not take much persuading that the whole concept of the Strategic Defence Initiative was

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catastrophic. But when she found that her special friend was leading an Administration which would not budge on the issue, she was reduced — unlike President Mitterrand — to the humiliating tactic of trying to pretend that there was meaning in a distinction between supporting research aimed at producing Star Wars weapons and not supporting the deployment of those weapons once produced.

Thatcher adopted this position for two reasons. The first, once again, was the need to 'preserve' the special relationship. She might do well to observe that a Socialist Mitterrand who roundly attacked Star Wars from the outset commands every bit as much attention in Washington as the British government.

The second reason was touting for business for Britain. And here, once again, Mrs Thatcher has discovered that the special relationship means nothing. With complete cynicism and in brutally insensitive terms, US Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger demanded political support for Star Wars as the price for getting any of the Star Wars potentially fabulous research contracts.

In practice French and Canadian companies and institutions, whose governments have indicated flat opposition to Star Wars, seem to be every bit as likely to get Star Wars related research work as, say, their British and German equivalents, whose governments gave in to the Weinberger treatment. And in practice that, in any case, means just as likely to get not very much.

There appear to be only three relatively minor contracts involving Europe that have as yet even got to the talking stage. A French company is talking about a laser mirror. A West German company is offering telescopic direction equipment. Neither of these projects is yet firm. And, in Scotland, Heriot-Watt University has won a $100,000 research contract on computation and optics. That is so far the sum total of the crumbs from the supposedly joint scientific venture that have fallen in the direction of Europe.

Even at this limited level the Star Wars activity outside the United States will be designed to America's advantage. It appears that negotiations for Memoranda of Understanding are proceeding steadily with the British and West German governments, but they are concerned in the main with questions of regulating the transfer of technology, access to classified data and the nature of contracts. It has been made quite expressly clear that even those countries which accept the need to sign such a Memorandum with the United States cannot expect any reverse feedback of interesting scientific or military information from the Star Wars project as a whole.

What is being proposed is just a classic exercise in scientific imperialism. The US military-industrial complex will be using specific contracts to tap into such scientific talent as it can identify in Europe, Japan, Israel and elsewhere in order to strengthen the domestic US effort. The Reagan Administration and American industry is offering nothing in return by way of compensating technology transfer in the other direction.

The British government piously hoped that by an early declaration of unquestioning loyalty it could get the preferential share of the work that, in any case, a special relationship surely deserved. Defence Secretary Heseltine, it is reliably reported in Washington, went on behalf of the government to ask for some global figure like $2 billion of work to be written into the Memorandum of Understanding with the British. But he was simply laughed out of court. A Heriot-Watt contract or two is more what the Americans have in mind.

In any case, as the Israelis have found with similar Memoranda of Understanding governing the way in which the Israeli domestic armament industry has been built up, such spending targets are seldom met and US companies always get preference at a later stage, when they come into competition with foreign suppliers. In our own case the understandings that there would be US military orders for equipment from the UK in order to offset some of the huge cost of buying Trident missiles have simply not been met. Instead of apologising for this failure to act in good faith, the US Navy Secretary John Lehman is reported recently to have told the Prime Minister that she should feel grateful that she is only being asked to pay for the manufacturing cost of the new missiles and not to make a contribution to their development cost. The Americans know perfectly well that, so long as this country has a government that wishes to continue posturing as an independent nuclear power, they have us over a barrel.

The final humiliation for Mrs Thatcher in the military field does not have to do with Star Wars at all. It is that, despite her personal pleading with the White House, the US Army is set to buy a French military communications system, Rita, instead of the rival British system Ptarmigan (even though it would have consisted substantially of American-manufactured components).

The Americans make a great song and dance about the military and cost effectiveness of greater standardisation of NATO equipment whenever it suits their commercial advantage. Yet here the US Army is being allowed to buy communications equipment from a country which has opted out of the military side of NATO for decades. Quite apart from that, when Mr Weinberger was first indulging in his brutally hard sell of the political idea of Star Wars, it was specifically made clear to the British government that its attitude on Star Wars would have a material bearing on the Ptarmigan-Rita decision. Thatcher duly did the lap dog turn. Mitterrand did the opposite. But the French are set to get the contract.

Sir Geoffrey's blind eye

At a more directly political level, the lap dog relationship is making the British government look extraordinarily foolish and exposed over South Africa. It is clear that events in South Africa are now moving at a pace that few would have predicted a year or even six months ago, when the Botha government appeared successfully to have destabilised the government in Mozambique, to have at least uneasy control of the border with Angola and to have dispersed the leadership of the African National Congress.

The situation today has the distinct feel of impending revolution. The ruling whites no longer know what to do. The government has run out of options. The grand Botha plan of coupling the coloureds and the Indians to the white state machine as second-class citizens and driving the blacks out of South Africa into bogus homelands has quite simply failed.

Virtually the whole of the rest of the industrial world can see that this is the moment when it must be right to apply such increased pressure as is available on the Botha regime. Britain is almost uniquely placed for reasons of history, investment and commerce to apply such pressure. And yet Sir Geoffrey Howe on behalf of the British government chooses to stand in the way of even symbolic gestures on the part of the European Community as a whole against South Africa.

Instead he continues to mouth the platitudes of the last twenty years about the importance of persuasion and quiet pressure and of not doing anything that would harm the black population of South Africa itself. If the business community of South Africa can clearly see the writing on the wall before their noses — so that, despite express requests from their Prime Minister, they send a delegation of their leading figures to establish contact with the ANC in exile — how can Sir Geoffrey Howe not understand that something is happening?

The reason of course is that the Reagan Administration in its isolation continues to do what it can to give the Botha regime support and the special relationship requires that the UK should lap dog along. When the revolution comes in South Africa, this sorry episode will not be forgotten and British interests and influence in an important area of the world will have been further harmed. □

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MILITARY USE FEARED FOR TWO TONNES OF PLUTONIUM MISSING FROM POWER STATIONS

ABOUT SIX TONNES of plutonium produced by Britain's civil nuclear power stations are missing, two tonnes of which could have been used in nuclear weapons, according to detailed calculations by four scientists published in this week's *Nature* magazine. ROB EDWARDS reports

Martin Bond

Sellafield, from where some plutonium was lost. But there's more to account for

THE SCIENTISTS, co-ordinated by Dr Keith Barnham, a physicist from Imperial College in London, have estimated Britain's total civil plutonium stockpile using three different mathematical methods all of which come up with approximately the same results. They reckon that Britain's Magnox reactors produced a total of around 47 tonnes of plutonium up to the end of March this year.

The government has admitted to the existence of just 40.5 tonnes in the civil stockpile at that time, leaving some six tonnes unaccounted for. Barnham and his colleagues reckon that something under four tonnes has been sent to America (where it is destined for weapons use) and that a little has been lost during reprocessing at Sellafield in Cumbria. They conclude that there are at least two tonnes the destinations of which are unknown. 'Until this is clarified the suspicion will exist that these destinations could be military,' they say.

Where's it gone?

One of their tables also makes clear that since the beginning of April 1969 Electricity Board reactors have produced about two tonnes of high purity plutonium suitable for weapons use. Yet, according to the government, there is no such plutonium in the existing civil stockpile.

The scientists allege that there are 'serious shortcomings in the procedures for plutonium accountancy in Britain.' They call for more information to be made available on past plutonium production and urge the British Government to accept 'effective safeguards' on all its civil facilities.

Their allegations seriously undermine persistent official assurances that no civil plutonium has been used for weapons purposes. They also underline the hypocrisy of the 'holier-than-thou' position currently being advanced by Britain at the Non Proliferation Treaty review conference in Geneva (see below).

The calculations were initially presented as part of CND's evidence last year to the Sizewell Inquiry where they were criticised by the Central Electricity Generating Board. All the Board's criticisms have been investigated and a few minor changes made as a result. ●

The plutocrats go on trial

MEETING IN PARALLEL with the official Non Proliferation Treaty Renewal Conference in Geneva last weekend was an international gathering of anti-nuclear activist groups. What the two conferences had in common was a concern with the risk of nuclear proliferation — a risk that exists throughout the length of the nuclear chain.

The International Citizens' Tribunal Against Nuclear Proliferation, as it was called, heard testimony from activists across the globe — from SWAPO on Namibian uranium to the Phillipines, West Germany, France, Switzerland, and the US. Also present was Maria Pangelinian from the Pacific Marianas Islands, who'll be in London next week to repeat her condemnation to the London Dumping Convention of the prospect of massive radioactive pollution of the Pacific by the Japanese. 'Despite their horrific nuclear experience of 40 years ago', she says, 'the Japanese themselves are now prepared to inflict a radioactive future on their neighbours in the Pacific.'

The Argentine physicist Jose Westerkamp of 'Movip' (the Argentine anti-nuclear organisation) and Dr Dhirendra Sharma of 'Cosnup' (its Indian equivalent) each explained the threat of expanding nuclear development in their countries. In both the potential militarisation of nuclear power was stressed — a claim which they backed up with detailed evidence. Greenpeace and CND testified to the British situation.

One of the major concerns of the conference was the possible emergence of a European nuclear force based on plutonium extracted from re-processed fast reactor fuel, perhaps from the proposed Dounreay plant. What makes this likely is the development of a pan-European fast breeder reactor programme — the French opened their Super Phoenix fast breeder plant earlier this month, and a number of senior French officials have publicly stated that it will have a military role.

To oppose this alarming development a network of campaigners has been set up in each of the countries participating in the programme. This anti-plutonium network will concentrate on trying to halt the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel — and will complement the moves already made by the Nordic states at the NPT review conference to try to prevent the production of new nuclear explosive materials at the source.

There were also calls for the West Germans to abandon their nascent plans to build a new reprocessing plant at Wackersdorf in Bavaria. The project is already opposed by the SPD and the Greens, and a major protest rally is planned for 12 October in Munich.

David Lowrey

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Life with the Americans

WOMAN WHO ASKED TOO MANY QUESTIONS

Roger Fish

Christine Saltmarshe: 'I just feel we're being talked into war'

CHRISTINE SALTMARSHE triggered off enquiries which have revealed the secret Ground Defence Area plans (*NS* 6 September) when she enquired to the local United States base about emergency war plans. She had read that the United States Air Force had routine plans to have 'ground defense for air bases up to five kilometers outside the base fence'. Such a defence zone would include and extend far beyond her home in the tiny Cambridgeshire village of Alconbury Western, where she and her family have lived for fifteen years. DUNCAN CAMPBELL and PATRICK FORBES report

LESS THAN a mile away is the perimeter fence of the giant Alconbury airbase, from which operate high altitude TR-1 spy planes and other squadrons of training and reconnaissance aircraft. The base is currently being extended and an extra runway is to be built. All her immediate neighbours are American service families, with whom relations had always been friendly. In the 1970s, an Alconbury US service family became godparents to her now 13 year old daughter. She used to visit the base regularly for social events, including the funeral of the son of one of the American families next door.

Although her opinions about war and nuclear weapons have not changed, her neighbours have altered their opinions of British 'natives'. The arrival of cruise missiles, and British protests against them, she believes, marked the point at which British and American communities around Alconbury split.

Cold-shouldered

Now, when she visits or goes near USAF Alconbury, she gets arrested or harrassed. New byelaws were passed without notice this summer, prohibiting camping or loitering on the perimeter of the base. Americans shun her for having been a fervent supporter of the peace camp at nearby Molesworth. Her daughter's godparents now refuse to visit. Last month, she, together with a vicar and six others, were arrested for alleged criminal damage when they entered USAF Alconbury and held communion on a runway.

The service was partly held in protest about an incident in June, which may have been intended to intimidate her. A helicopter flew over, and hovered literally a few feet above her rooftop. At first she thought it was an ordinary low flying aircraft. Then she went out and saw a crew member climbing back into a helicopter. She did not see what he had been doing. After some further minutes hovering above her roof, it flew off. 'It was so frightening, all sorts of things ran through my head. My little boy said "they're coming for us".'

When the *New Statesman* made initial enquiries about the incident to RAF Mildenhall, we were told that 'there has not been any mission. . . there's a lot of misinformation going around, you know'. But Mrs Saltmarshe had reported the incident to the police, who found out that the helicopter was British and had come from RAF Oakington — but on orders from the US Air Force at Alconbury. It was suggested that pilot had been ordered to take photographs of US service houses in the area, 'for security reasons'.

MoD grovels

Whether the incident was an accidential, or a planned provocation, it eventually became clear that senior RAF officers had nothing to do with it. The Ministry of Defence apologised profusely that the helicopter had taken an 'unauthorised diversion from its authorised route'. The pilot was disciplined, and ordered to apologise to her in person.

The incident had occurred two days after she had telephoned the Ministry of Defence to ask what had happened to her three letters — two of them to Secretary of State Michael Heseltine — asking about emergency plans for the Alconbury area. In fact, the Ministry of Defence has never answered her letters personally. But after Labour peers Lord Hatch and Lord Jenkins complained to the government, the Home Office wrote to say that, yes, there were ground defence plans for important installations like Alconbury. They admitted that they had devised the GDAs.

Mrs Saltmarshe is still waiting for a reply from the Ministry. Soon after the helicopter incident, detectives from Cambridgeshire police — possibly Special Branch — visited to enquire about her politics, and support for Molesworth peace camp as a signatory to the camp's bank account. 'I just feel we're being talked into war', she said last week. ●

Race strikers return — but fight goes on by other means

AFTER five and a half weeks out on strike, Islington council employees returned to work last week, with their major demand still unmet.

The 150 members of Nalgo were in dispute with the council over their refusal to work with an employee who an internal enquiry had found guilty of racial harrassment — and who was then posted to work with the public in a neighbourhood office.

The backbone of the strike was broken when in the first week in September a ballot of the whole branch asking for an all-out strike failed. Then the first meeting of the council's ruling Labour group after the summer recess voted to back the council's policy.

In the preceding few days, 12 out of 20 wards in Islington had mandated their councillors to back Nalgo — but of those 29 councillors, at least five broke their mandate and 11 simply didn't turn up for the meeting.

The strikers are understandably depressed but say they're not totally demoralised and intend to carry on the dispute in other ways. At the mass meeting which voted to return to work on 11 September, they decided to form a working party on racism. 'Hundreds of people, literally, have signed up to join it', said a spokesperson.

Alarmingly though, since the strike, leaflets put out by 'Islington Council White Staff Defence Group' have been circulating in the council, demanding 'Defend Rights for Whites'. ●

In memoriam — 50 years late

ON 5 OCTOBER Michael Foot will unveil a memorial to those who went to Spain to fight for the Republic in the Spanish Civil War. It has taken fifty years for the British as a whole to remember them. (Scotland and Wales have had memorials to their own people for some years.)

The rapidly dwindling band of survivors of the 2000 plus who went — nobody is sure how many — had been working on the idea for several yeas before the GLC agreed to donate a site on the South Bank between County Hall and the Festival Hall and the International Brigade raised sufficient funds to commission sculptor Ian Walters to design the memorial.

It's therefore almost beyond belief that the GLC Tories are objecting to what they consider 'unnecessary expense'. They are even monitoring the number of people attending a reception after the ceremony, with a view to cutting back on immediate relations such as grandchildren.

Bill Alexander, the last commander of the British Battalion of the 15th International Brigade says he finds it sad that this is the only response the Tory group can make: 'They tried to stop the project in many ways.' Those who wish to attend the ceremony itself will be very welcome — it takes place at 12 noon in the Jubilee gardens.

Judith Cook

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Andrew Moore

ANOTHER 28 City AA demonstrators were arrested last Friday night. City AA had their answer to the Met's banner 'You are causing an obstruction.' They unfurled their own banner 'You are obstructing the struggle against apartheid.' The police were unmoved.

How the *Sun* torments transsexuals . . .

'FATHER OF FIVE'S sex change on the rates' was the headline on a *Sun* 'exclusive' Monday 16 September. The 'story' explained how Rachel Webb's sex-change operation in *1983* was 'paid for by the ratepayers' while she was working part-time for the London Tenants' Organisation. LTO made interest free loans to Webb to help finance the medical treatment she needed. The LTO, which no longer exists, was funded by the GLC and local councils. Hence 'sex change on the rates'.

Here's what really happened. Rachel Webb borrowed a total of £2,150 from the LTO to be repaid at £25 a month initially, later increased to £30 a month. The loan was just one of a number made by LTO staff over a four year period. Some used the money to buy new cars. She used hers to help pay for her sex change. The medical treatment needed by transsexuals isn't available on the NHS — they're forced to seek very expensive private treatment. Rachel Webb's treatment has cost a total of £10,000. The loan was only 20 per cent of this cost.

Earlier this year the *Mail on Sunday* planned similar 'exposé' of the case. For the sake of a titillating story, Fleet Street seems prepared to cause Rachel Webb great distress and jeopardise her work with the homeless and rootless. She tells the *NS*: 'I am in constant dread of the press. I never know when they'll attack again. When will I be left to live my life in peace?'

Terry O'Halloran

... and infuriates blacks and Asians

SOME 40 ANGRY Asians, West Indians and white anti-racists picketed outside the *Sun*'s London offices on Friday 13 September to protest against the paper's coverage of the Handsworth riots and in particular an article by Roy Kerridge, described by the *Sun* as 'an expert on black Britain'.

Kerridge's article, headlined 'Why the West Indians hate Asians' was attacked by protestors as 'an attempt to foment inter-racial violence between the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities.' The *Sun*, demonstrators said, was claiming that 'Zulu-like West Indians are killing passive, innocent Asian shopkeepers.'

A delegation from the picket wanted to see the editor Kelvin McKenzie but were told he wasn't there. Those standing by a side stairway were told by security guards either to clear out or be thrown out by the police. The police arrived half an hour later and took the megaphone from an Asian leader, Rashid Meer, while he was addressing the protestors. But the picket continued without the megaphone, and the slogans became louder and more enthusiastic.

There demonstrators plan to take further action: anyone interested should contact Rashid Meer on 01-354 3421.

Anwar Iqbal

MISCELLANY

The ghost remains

The Soviet Union's expulsion of British journalists and diplomats was reported in full in last week's *Sunday Times* by the paper's Moscow correspondent, David Hatton. If you were wondering why Hatton himself was not on the hit-list, wonder no more. He does not exist. There is no journalist called David Hatton in Moscow. He is a figment of the *Sunday Times*'s imagination, and the Soviets can hardly expel a figment.

Sasha regrets

There was fallout from these events, too, here at Farringdon Lane, where we were looking forward to a long arranged visit by a foreign journalist posted in London to explore 'areas of mutual interest'. At the last moment the office of Soviet Weekly *rang to say that its deputy editor, Alexander (Sasha) Kodintsev was suddenly otherwise engaged — or rather disengaged.*

Porter's Paradise

You may suspect that we're carrying out a mean, vindictive and wholly pointless campaign against the current regime at Westminster . . . City Council. This is true; however, our worst fears have been justified by the arrival on a thousand Westminster doormats of the *Ratepayer Recorder*. Published by the City of Westminster, this journal kicks off with an 'EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW' with Lady Shirley Porter, leader of the council — so enterprising to secure an exclusive interview with your own boss. 'Westminster has nothing to fear from the abolition of the GLC,' opines Shirl — real foot in the door stuff. When Miscellany asked the council press office about the lack of dissent in their organ we were ticked off in no uncertain terms: 'You are being incredibly naive . . . if people wish to write in, they may.' Go on, take them at their word.

Thank God for that

At their first Dundee press conference, Liberal deputy leader Alan Beith soared into a prediction of an overall Alliance victory at the next election in view of opinion polls and by-election advances. Conference groupie Andrew Roth asked how Liberals might do in a Dundee by-election, a reference to rumours that ailing left-wing Labour MP Ernie Ross might resign from Dundee West. Incoming president David Penhaligon, who thinks most Liberal advances will come in his South West, snorted: 'We'll be in the first four.' Scottish Liberal leader Sir Russell Johnston admitted Dundee West is 'not the most favourable around.' Knowing it's probably the

Scottish Liberals' least favourable seat, Sir Russell added happily that he had heard 'Ernie Ross is getting better.'

Flucky draw 3

Entries are pouring in (well OK, there's been a steady trickle) in our competition to find rivals to BBC 2's dreadful sitcom *The New Statesman*. This week's prize of a Fluck and Law rubber politician goes to Basil Ransome-Davies for his eccentric interpretation of *Marxism Today*: 'Here's an up-to-the minute comedy series featuring two brothers who live under the same roof — but they have very different interests: Joe (Oliver Reed) is the traditional man's man: he's full of fixed opinions and he spends his spare time building a tank in the back garden. Nick (Rik Mayall) is into gay discos and designer water. Something's got to give — or has it? Their sister Rosa (Victoria Wood) — she's the brains of the household — has to keep the peace. And it's not always easy. Should she stay at home to cook Joe's dinner or swan off to a Duran Duran concert with Nick? This is one to make you red in the face with laughter.' Similar plotlines for sitcoms named after inappropriate periodicals or broadcasting institutions still in demand — max 100 words. We'll continue to accept entries until all the squeaky toys have been disposed of.

Cheeky boy

Scene: *Downing St meeting of ministers is breaking up. Herself has been hectoring once more on the need to do something about abolishing the rates in time for next month's Tory Conference. Chancellor Lawson has been putting the usual, but as it happens on this occasion correct, Treasury line that if there was any sensible way of changing the rating system, someone would have come up with it by now. Our Downing St mole reports the following exchange:*
Herself: *It's no good Nigel, you'll just have to fall into line on this one.*
Nigel *(aside): You know, the woman is becoming a meglomaniac.*

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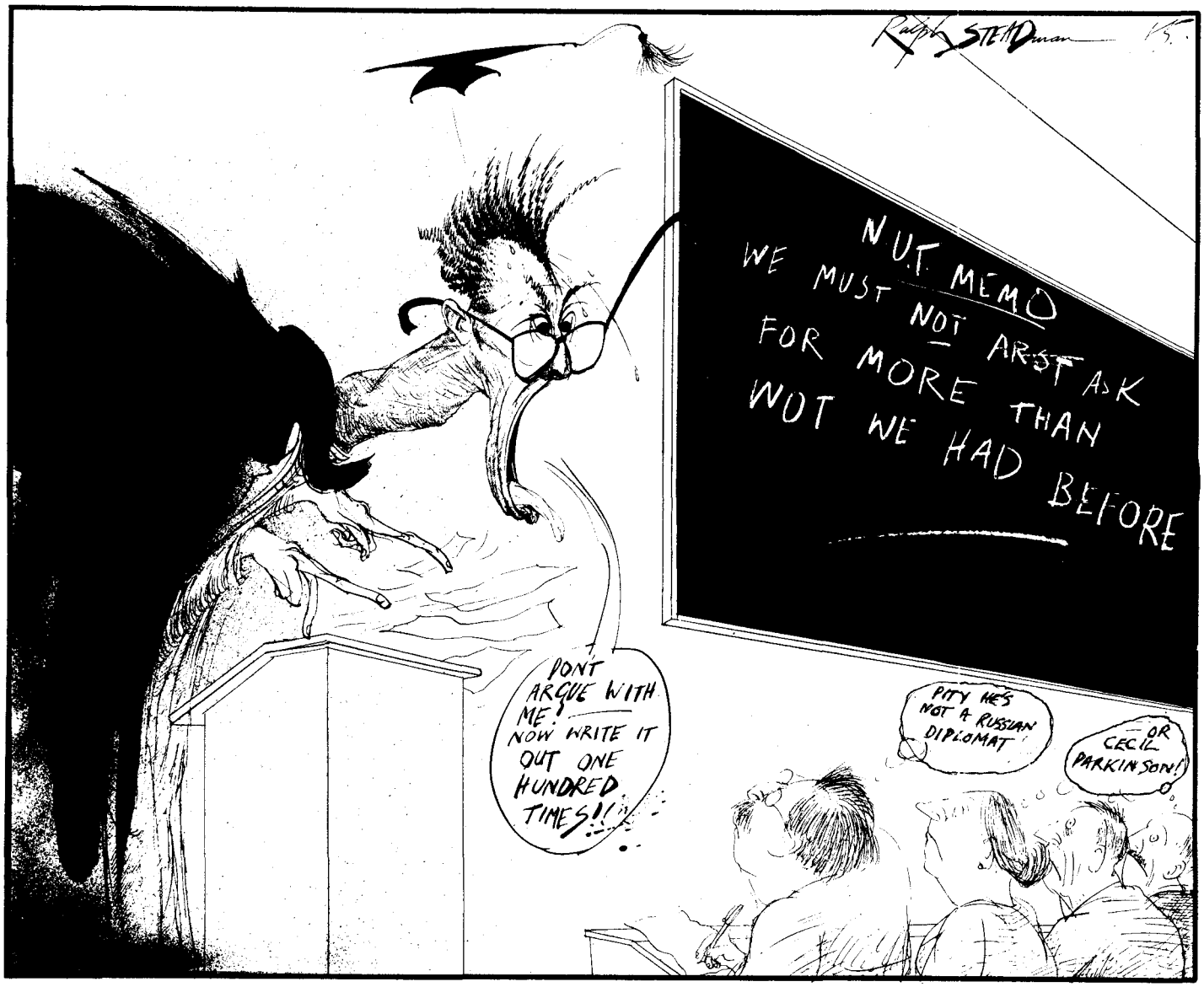
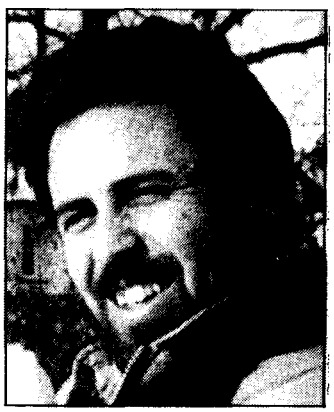

Ralph Steadman
N.U.T. MEMO
WE MUST NOT ASK FOR MORE THAN WOT WE HAD BEFORE
DON'T ARGUE WITH ME! NOW WRITE IT OUT ONE HUNDRED TIMES!!!
PITY HE'S NOT A RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT
— OR CECIL PARKINSON!



Paul Martin: no secrets revealed

'My good friend — the Soviet spy'

If my friend Yuri Rhozkhov is — as Her Majesty's Government contends — a Russian agent, then the KGB's training programme must have gone sadly awry. They should at least teach their spies to tell you the time in good English.

'Four to twenty' the man in the dark old fashioned suit informed me, peering intently at his watch, as the Number 53 bus to Highgate swayed to and fro. 'You mean twenty to four?' I enquired. It was the start of a brief friendship interrupted by his hasty departure from this country for the soil of Mother Russia.

I must say I was surprised when he eagerly accepted my on-the-spot invitation for him and his family to visit us. It turned out we were nearly neighbours, in that the Soviet Trade Delegation's headquarters are close by, and he lived not far from them, though he never told us precisely where. Neither did he ever give us his home phone number, saying there was only a communal phone (a suitably Communist set-up) and whoever answered was unlikely to speak English. Should that have raised our suspicion?

Should I also have wondered why he had the freedom to visit us when other East Bloc people are so reticent towards us local folk near the Trade Delegation that they respond with a thin smile or a curt nod when you greet them with your best effort at pronouncing 'Dobri Doi'?

Anyway, Yuri and his wife Natalia came to tea, along with his two small daughters. Children proved to be a useful talking point to break the ice. Natalia, an attractive lady wearing casual but elegant Western clothing, was 'astonished', she said, at how scantily the British' clad their youngsters. 'Back home, we dress them very warmly,' she said; a point reinforced by her daughters' woollen hats and layers of clothing, as our child frolicked barefoot on the carpet.

The Rhozkhovs had arrived early this year and were planning to stay for three years. Ours appeared to be the first Western home they'd been in: they were clearly impressed, and were thinking of putting their eldest child in a British state school, despite her lack of English. The child in question delivered her only English sentence with great gusto, though. 'Tasty, tasty, very very tasty,' she intoned, imitating a well-known television commercial.

The Rhozkhovs popped in from time to time, and even offered to take us for a ride in their newly-acquired motor car. But then the spy scandal blew up. There it was: 'Yuri Rhozkhov, 37, translator, International Cocoa Board, married with two daughters,' second to last on the list in the morning paper of the 25 Soviets being expelled from Britain for 'activities wholly inconsistent with their duties in Britain', the diplomatic euphemism for spying.

What dark secrets of global strategic import, I wondered, lurked in the vaults of the International Cocoa Board. Surely only cocoa powder?

I am proud to say I betrayed none of my country's state secrets. It was just as well, though, that no one had entrusted any to me. Mind you, I had to sign acceptance of the Official Secrets Act upon joining the BBC, so perhaps the Russians thought I was more important than I am.

A more mundane explanation for why the Rhozkhovs and the Martins became friends is that he and his wife simply wanted some Western company, just as we were interested in getting to know some Russians. Natalia was keen to practice the English she had learned at college but had never had the chance to employ in authentic English-speaking company.

I find it hard to conceive how Yuri could have been much of a danger to state security. But even assuming, as I must, that he was a spy, he and Natalia are really nice people . . . and they're still my friends.

Paul Martin

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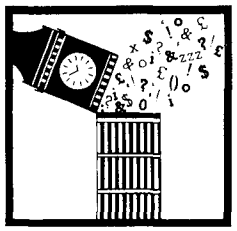

Come back class politics, all is forgiven

PETER KELLNER

IN THE BUSINESS it is known simply as 'Butler and Stokes'. Ask almost any political scientist which has been the most important single book since World War II on electoral behaviour and the chances are that you will not be told the book's title, *Political Change in Britain*, but its authors' surnames.

Well, 'Butler and Stokes' is about to be supplanted. I am afraid the new name is rather more of a mouthful — 'Heath, Jowell and Curtice' — but their book, *How Britain Votes*, out next week*, is certain to become the standard text for the next decade on who votes how and why. Based on an extensive survey shortly after the last general election of almost 4,000 electors, it provides new information, fresh insights and original analysis. From now on, anyone who tries to engage in serious debate about public attitudes without having first mastered their 'Heath, Jowell and Curtice' (hereinafter known as HJC) deserves to be eaten alive.

Much of the book's pre-publication publicity has centred on the emerging identity of Liberal and SDP supporters. David Owen has it about right: many of them really are tough (economically) and tender (socially). The point ought not to be overstated; many fewer Alliance voters are strong supporters of their parties than Labour or Tory voters are of theirs. In the Harris Poll for ITV's *Weekend World* last Sunday, 43 per cent of Labour voters supported their party 'very strongly', compared with 39 per cent of Tory supporters and just 23 per cent of Alliance supporrters.

Yet something is happening out there. HJC tell us what. They confirm some of the ideas floated in this column elsewhere, but sink others. In particular, they reinstate class loyalties as a crucial determinant of voting choice. After a decade of talk about class de-alignment, and voters shopping around for the 'best buy' among the parties as if they were choosing a new video recorder, HJC have put class (and, dare one say it, Marx) back on the psephological map.

Conventional opinion poll-based analysis of politics and social class has depended on the way pollsters define class. Since pollsters are essentially market researchers, they use market research definitions, principally designed to meet the needs of advertisers.

For many political purposes the system works: AB for professional and managerial, C1 for clerical, C2 for skilled manual and DE for semi- and unskilled workers and pensioners. Two problems arise, however. The first is that this scheme is as strongly related to income as to class status. For example, it does not distinguish between skilled workers who work wholly to the dictates of a foreman and those who have factory floor responsibilities for others. Nor does it deal satisfactorily with self-employed people who are distributed among the 'classes' despite having a distinct class position according to any analysis concerned more with social attitudes than consumption patterns.

The second problem relates to the classification of women — or, more strictly, to adults who are not deemed to be the 'head of the household'. If two women sit together in a typing pool — one married to a teacher, the other to a skilled mechanic — the first is classified as 'B', the second as 'C2': it is their husbands' jobs that count, not their own. The possibility that the women's own work status and experiences matter is discounted. (If a third typing pool colleague is single and lives on her own, then she *is* classified according to her job: she ranks as a 'C1'.)

HJC use a different, more formally class-based, set of categories; and each working adult is classified according to his or her own job. (Non-working adults are still classified according to the occupation of the head of the household.) Their classifications are:

- The salariat: managers, supervisors of non-manual workers, professionals — 27 per cent of the electorate.
- Routine non-manual: clerks, sales workers, secretaries etc — 24 per cent.
- Petty bourgeoisie: farmers, small proprietors, self-employed manual workers — 8 per cent.
- Foremen and technicians: the 'blue collar elite', whose supervisory functions and degree of autonomy at work set them apart from other manual workers — 7 per cent.
- The working class: rank-and-file manual employees in industry and agriculture. This group includes many skilled workers — sometimes highly-paid ones — but their distinguishing 'class' characteristic is that they are subject to detailed supervision at work and their jobs are relatively insecure — 34 per cent.

According to the BBC/Gallup survey on election day, this is how Britain voted in 1983:

	Con	Lab	Lib/SDP
	%	%	%
AB	61	12	26
C1	55	21	24
C2	39	35	27
DE	29	44	28

But according to HJC's classifications, this is what happened:

Petty bourgeoisie	71	12	17
Salariat	54	14	31
Foremen/technicians	48	26	25
Routine non-manual	46	25	27
Working class	30	49	20

Two clear, and fundamentally important, conclusions emerge from these two sets of figures. The first is that the variations in support for each party are greater under the HJC classifications than the conventional ones. This is particularly so for the Alliance. Whereas Gallup (like all the other pollsters at the time) found little variation in Alliance support among different classes, HJC found significantly less support than average among both the petty bourgeoisie and the working class and significantly more among the salariat.

The second conclusion is that Tory support is greatest not among managers or the professional classes, but among Mrs Thatcher's heroes: the petty bourgeoisie. This is despite the fact that this group earns the *lowest* average income of any of the HJC classes; but their class position in relation to capital, labour and the market place leads them to have the most right-wing social and political attitudes.

Conversely, Labour's weakness among C2s has not been so much among skilled workers as among foremen and technicians and the manual self-employed. HJC find that skilled workers who have no control over their daily working lives have much the same range of political attitudes as unskilled workers.

An even more significant finding flows from this analysis. *There has been no significant class de-alignment since the 1960s.* That is, there is no consistent long-term trend that class has any less influence on voting behaviour than it did 20 years ago. The reason that class *seems* to matter less is essentially an artefact of conventional polling technique rather than true de-alignment.

So is this good news for Labour? Yes and no. Yes in the sense that the party has every reason to hope that in a 'normal' general election (as opposed to the disastrous result in 1983 when Labour lost ground among all classes), it should be able to bring out its traditional class vote.

The bad news is that the working class, as defined by HJC, is a much smaller share of the electorate than it used to be — down from 47 per cent in 1964 to 34 per cent in 1983. The salariat, on the other hand, increased from 19 to 27 per cent.

For those of us who remember Harold Wilson's 1964 victory, when Labour returned to power after 13 years of Tory rule, here is a sobering thought: had the distribution of votes among each class been the same in 1983 as in 1964, then the change in class structure alone would have yielded the following result: Conservatives 50 per cent, Labour 35, Liberal 14. Mrs Thatcher would still have won by a landslide.

The lessons of all this are considerable. We shall look at some of them next week. □

*Published by Pergamon, £15.95 hb, £7.95 pb.

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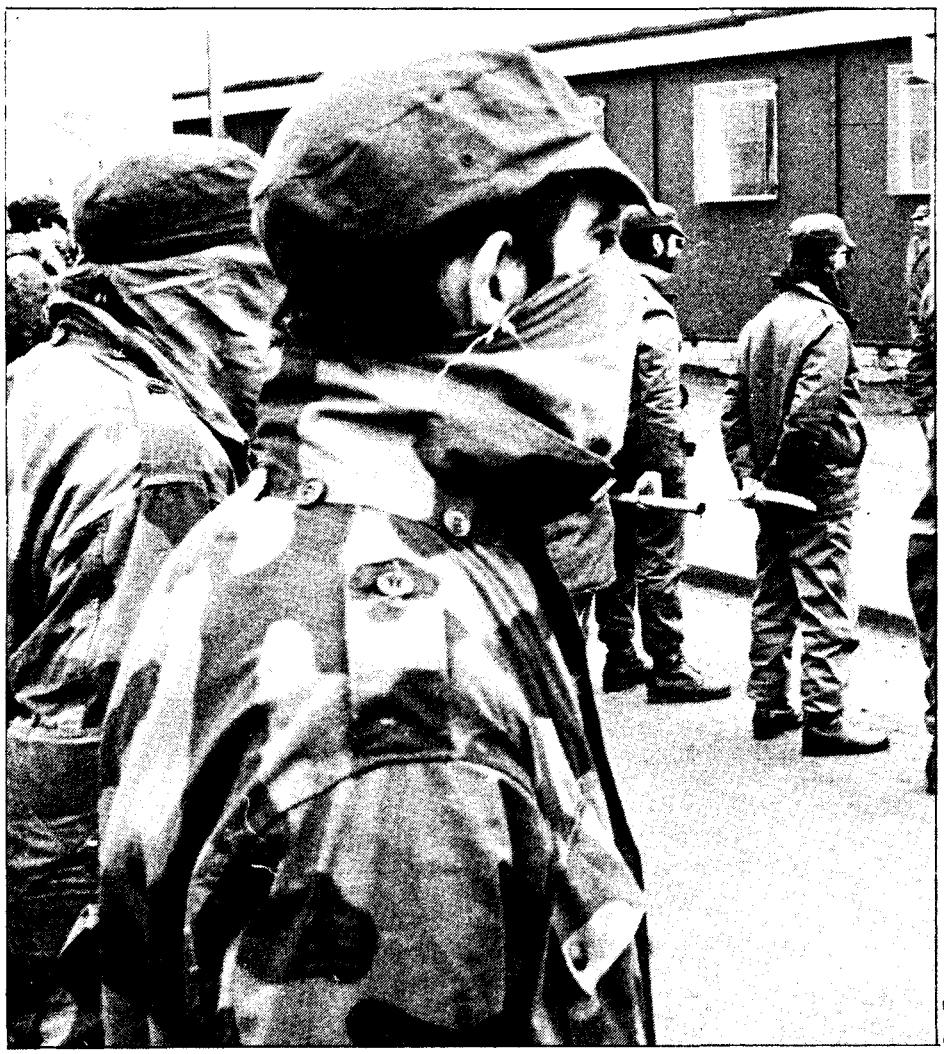
'TROOPS OUT' IS NO POLICY



Rex Features

Protestants have been ready to stand to arms in Ulster since 1913. . .

Negotiations been London and Dublin over the future of Ulster have reached a critical stage. BERNARD CRICK argues that small steps are the only way forward and that the Left must accept this reality

EVENTS are moving faster than most people realise in the negotiations between the British and Irish governments. Only days before his transfer from Belfast to Handsworth, Douglas Hurd said that the outcome would be known 'within weeks rather than months'. The annual meeting of the British Irish Association two weekends ago was postponed until early January because both governments said that no Ministers or civil servants could attend at such a delicate stage.

When, earlier this month, Douglas Hurd and Christopher Patten, ministers who have both earned the respect of Irish politicians, were shuffled out and Tom King shuffled in, it looked superficially as if the negotiations did not rank high in Mrs Thatcher's priorities. But consider the dog that did not bark. The *Irish Times* has been careful to point out that the Irish negotiators remained remarkably unruffled. They have known all summer that, for better or for worse (and Garret FitzGerald has repeatedly warned that he sees the chances of success as 'no mor than fifty-fifty'), the details and progress of the negotiations are now firmly in the mind and hands of Mrs T. herself.

Last year when the Forum Report came out, she had to be prompted at her famous Press conference as to what was the third option put forward and rejected by her as 'that's out too'. She had forgotten 'joint authority'. Well, that is still out but she now grasps what the issue is and any agreement will open the door to that direction in the future.

All that is actually on the table this time is a structure of consultative institutions. Intergovernmental structures at Ministerial level are being discussed — formal but only consultative — which would bypass any need for consent in the North. Already there are, if you look for them, a remarkable number of North-South and East-West institutions, unusual between sovereign states: they can be built upon. Abolition or a complete reform of the Ulster Defence Regiment; a joint Parliamentary Council between the Dail and Westminster; scrutiny of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, acceptable to Catholic opinion; some form of Irish judicial presence in the North; some form of joint security authority for the border; a Minister of the Irish government, resident in Belfast; British legislation to create a formal equality of status between the two communities in Northern Ireland — these are the counters of a joint agreement. The British government wants the Irish to give up their constitutional claim to the North, but the Irish price for that politically precarious move would be very high, as distinct from an easier reiteration that the North comes under British sovereignty, until such time as a majority votes otherwise.

The Labour Party's instinctive reaction to this will be 'small beer' since its policy since 1981 has been 'to bring about the unification of Ireland'; but it cannot afford to be too cavalier at the Irish government's efforts because that sentence in its 1981 document continued: 'by agreement and consent between the two parts of Ireland'. That is less a policy than a pious aspiration and an historic goal.

How to get there, how to cross the almost unbridgeable logical gap between 'unity' and 'consent' (unless demography one day obliges), remains undiscussed. The only people in constituency parties who want to discuss it at all usually have fixed minds and magic solutions. If Northern Ireland has been the proving ground of the modern British army, it has also too often been the self-indulgent street theatre of the British Left.

WHAT MOST on the Left do not grasp is that no one in Ireland now, except the IRA and INLA in practice and Charles Haughey in speeches, believes that 'the unity of Ireland' could or should ever mean a centralised, unitary state — like the Republic itself or on the more dubious model of the United Kingdom (ignoring Wales and Scotland). Most people in Ireland are also aware that for any such great constitutional changes affecting such deeply felt beliefs and traditions in both North and South, there is no substitute or subterfuge for *actual* consent. People would and could wreck it if something was thrust on them as 'implied' consent.

If the Catholic community in the North cannot be coerced into loyalty to the present United Kingdom, the Protestant minority in

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the hypothetical united Ireland cannot be coerced either. Northern Ireland as a political entity was created by that 'community' standing to arms to resist Home Rule in 1913 and 1914 and Dublin rule in 1919 and 1920. Incredible as it may seem in Streatham or Surbiton, it would do so again.

The UDA plausibly claim to have 18,000 members with arms. 'Troops Out' as a policy might or might not mean a bloodbath in the North. Who knows? But the risk is totally repugnant to any government in Dublin or London and surely to any normal person. The most likely result would be a Protestant UDI with the RUC maintaining order — of a kind.

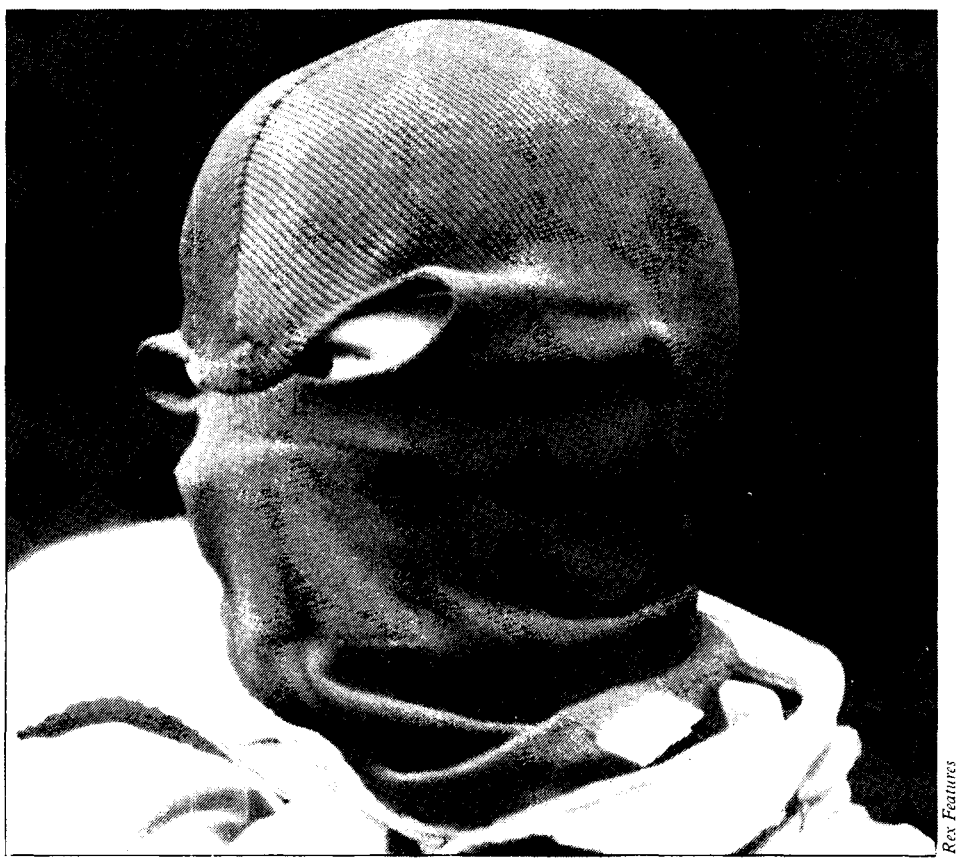
When leaders of the IRA are asked if they would not fear a selective massacre the night after the British army withdrew, they reply that the army should first have disarmed the UDA, the UDR and the RUC. This is not a very realistic view — even assuming Tony Benn as Prime Minister; but it is at least an unexpected compliment to the confessional neutrality and professionalism of the modern British army. It would obey orders to kill almost anyone, and — let's face it — most squaddies nowadays can't tell a Tig from a Prod or a bible from a missal.

Nothing the IRA could do on the mainland would force a precipitate withdrawal, not even killing the Prime Minister or the Queen, as they did her uncle. Such actions are more likely to stimulate stubborn resistance from the public and brutal reaction from the authorities. The IRA misjudge British opinion, or perhaps their few British friends mislead them, as they mislead themselves — cypto-terrorists who enjoy the pornographic voyeurism of somebody else's violence.

The IRA and INLA underestimate, from the perspective of their own heroic myth and cult of the Blood Sacrifice (compared to which their recent socialism is skin deep), the common sense and common morality of ordinary people. They believed that the Birmingham Bull Ring bomb, by killing scores of teenagers in a disco, and the Harrods bomb would hurry on the crisis by provoking the kind of anti-Irish riots that were once endemic in hard times in the inner cities of England and Scotland. Not even in Ireland does history always repeat itself. There is still some prejudice, true, but most Brits perceive a difference between their Irish neighbours and the IRA. And so, which is even more important, do most Irish men and women.

Certainly a national aspiration to unity exists in the South. All Irish parties favour unity — of some kind. In the last three Irish general elections opinion polls have shown that a majority favour unity, but in each of these elections only as seventh in importance of seven issues listed. The aspiration is there but of a low and quite unbellicose order of intensity.

So too here. Jowell and Airey reported in their 1984 volume of *British Social Attitudes* that a majority in all British political parties (Mrs Thatcher may have noted) favoured by 58 to 28 per cent that the 'long term' policy for Northern Ireland should be unity. But in the 1983 general election it did not register at all as a salient issue in any known poll. Thus in both countries public opinion favours 'unity', but not strongly. The answer may be to find a form of unity which itself is not all demanding and exclusive of all other allegiances.



Rex Features

. . .and the IRA continues to misjudge the effect of terrorism on British public opinion

The Labour Party must grasp the horns of the real dilemma: to understand and accept that Northern Ireland inherently faces both ways. It is better appreciated in the Republic than in England that historically and culturally Ulster has never been a normal part of either country (the Welsh and the Scots see this more clearly). There are a few individuals in the North who do not themselves mirror this corporate double identity — some would even say a triple identity: British, Irish and Ulster.

The cross-pressures of both British and Irish culture are so strong in Northern Ireland that no purely internal solution will work. Most Catholic opinion in the North is not for unity at any price, but does demand some institutional or constitutional form of Irish identity. Flags, symbols and Irish names, cultural equality within the present North are important conditions of peace and justice, but not by themselves sufficient. Yet one should be willing to give a limited welcome to almost anything that the Irish government is willing and able for the moment to accept. Nothing that is built to last can be built hurriedly.

IRISH THINKING is far ahead of British thinking on what can be meant both by 'unity' and by 'consent'. The Labour Party 1981 document was a pretty basic piece of political thinking, grasping the problem but offering no clear guidelines for policy.

The outcome of Irish thinking can be found in the *New Ireland Forum Report* of 1984. Garret FitzGerald's own views have long been accessible in books and essays as well as speeches. Other than Julius Nyere, there is no more thoughtful statesman in the modern world. But the distinction he has always drawn between federalism and confederalism was lost on the committee that created the camel — the Labour Party's 1981 policy statement.

FitzGerald also rejected a federal solution, even in an all-Ireland context, as being too threatening to the North. He talked about 'a confederal Ireland with a British dimension'. He meant that two parliaments should each have a veto against changing the original terms of the compact.

In this sense the EEC is a confederation. And such a position would not seem, as a framework for negotiation, poles apart from the Heath-Whitelaw Sunningdale formula of 1974: a power-sharing Northern Ireland but with an Irish dimension and as part of the United Kingdom until a majority vote otherwise — a framework that might have worked but for the cowardice and indecision of a Labour government faced by the Protestant Workers' strike. But the Labour Party committee, clearly thinking that 'confederalism' was a synonym for 'federalism', threw out the baby with the bathwater.

The Forum report saw three possible ways forward: a unitary state, federalism or confederalism, and 'joint authority'. The final recommendation had to be in principle for unity, otherwise Haughey would not have signed it; but it was highly qualified by descriptive sections dealing with 'present realities' and 'future requirements'. These sections clearly implied that in reality a unitary state could not work.

It contained a clear and unprecedented recognition, cutting through sixty years of nationalistic rhetoric, of the equal authenticity of 'the two identities'. Even the section advocating a unitary state said that there must be a new and a secular constitution based on 'agreement between the nationalist and unionist traditions'; and envisaged that 'a redefined relationship between Britain and Ireland would take account of the unionist sense

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of Britishness' to the extent of dual citizenship and 'an Irish-British council with intergovernmental and interparliamentary structures'.

The report implied a permanent role for Britain as the guarantor of Northern rights under the original compact:

> This constitution could only be formulated at an all-round constitutional conference convened by the British and Irish governments. Such a constitution would contain clauses which would guarantee... civil and religious liberties which apply at present to citizens of Northern Ireland. These guarantees could not subsequently be changes except by special procedures.

If this is the highest claim of Irish constitutional nationalism, how much more humane and realistic it is than the mysticism of Sinn Fein's 'One island one Ireland', the angry simplicity of 'Troops Out!' or the proud Tory muddle that 'Parliament cannot limit its own sovereignty'. Of course sovereignty can be limited, alienated or shared. History is full of examples.

NOTHING SO dramatic as this will emerge from the present hard negotiations, even if Mrs Thatcher's nerve and attention hold. But even some consultative structures are not to be scorned — inadequate, certainly, but at least the beginning of the possibility of progress. Less dramatic, but more humane than illusions of a United Ireland in the first hundred days of a Labour government, will be a commitment to building by negotiation new structures of cooperation within the North, between North and South and between Britain and Ireland.

And such a beginning can only come from within the existing constitutional law of both countries, if it is to carry the opinions of the majority as well as the minority in the North. Anything else is fantasy.

What will evolve may be something quite different from the sharp 'either/or' demarkations of traditional thinking: 'Is Northern Ireland to remain a part of the United Kingdom or become part of the Republic?" Opinion in the Labour Party, like once on Europe, gets trapped in this one-or-the-other logic of thinking on sovereignty — 'the fallacy of the excluded middle'. Is not the United Kingdom itself at least quasi-federal?

Myths of sovereignty should form no part of socialism, however sympathetic we should be to liberation movements, during the time of liberation, if they genuinely carry mass popular support. I was taught by Harold Laski that the myth of the sovereign state arose in the early seventeeth century, obscuring the inherent pluralism of advanced societies, to serve the needs of a capitalist market for a centrally enforced law and order.

There is no specifically socialist solution, however, to the Northern Irish problem. If only there were, as the Workers Party argue, a revolutionary working class all-Ireland party with mass support!

But nor is there a specifically nationalist solution. Socialists should at least show their greater inventiveness, realism, knowledge of history, disrespect for the taboos of nationalism, sovereignty and religious orthodoxy, and their care for the lives and welfare of ordinary working people. □

LIBERALS

UPP

ASHDOWN — IN FROM THE COLD

SARAH BENTON interviewed the man at the centre of the Alliance's defence debate

THERE ARE TWO current plausible views of why Paddy Ashdown, the highly personable Liberal MP for Yeovil, changed his mind on cruise missiles.

One is that he is an ambitious politician who has put his desire for office before his commitment to disarmament. The other is that he is an ambitious politician who, with hope of government office looking nearer, has recognised that his party cannot go naked into Owen's policy chamber.

Paddy Ashdown acknowledges he is ambitious but will not be drawn into public criticism of his leader's views on defence, including of whether or not David Steel actually has any. He also has a clear distaste for the idea that he has been — should still be — the spokesman for a peace movement which puts ideology before pragmatic and rational considerations of politics. He is an action man, an ex-member of the Special Boat Section and Foreign Office, and clearly a possible future leader of the Liberal Party, or at least second-in-command in the new merged alliance party which he would like to see.

His forceful speech attacking cruise missiles — militarily useless and damaging to NATO — at last year's Liberal Assembly at Bournemouth made him the darling of party members. He was, he says, 'lionised' at the time by the idealistic, vaguely pro-ecological, pro-unilateralist activists whom the SDP so publicly despises.

He was also cold-shouldered by many of the party's MPs, who gave him a 'very difficult few months'. He says he told party members at the time: 'Look, you've no right to expect that I will always agree with you. There's going to be a time when I'll let you down by your lights because I've got to take my own position.

It took him, he says, four years to 'slough off the conditioning' on defence thinking of his years in the armed forces and Foreign Office. 'It was my kids, frankly, who helped me to do it. They actually showed me the truth of the matter'. It took him about five months to slough off the mantle, cast over him at Bournemouth, of being a hero of the peace movement. This time he's 'a bit worried' about what his daughter is going to think of his new stand and knows his son doesn't agree with him.

Cries of disloyalty and betrayal have echoed round him since he stood up at the SDP conference last week and made his speech arguing that Liberals should not promise that 'we would remove cruise immediately on coming to power'. His timing, he says, was a calculated political act ('wonderful' said the SDP Press Office in Torquay in surprised delight when he gave them a copy of his speech to issue). But he actually began to change his mind last February, after the talks in Geneva between the US and USSR had begun. The timing of his lunch around this time with US Ambassador Nitze, where the likely length of the Geneva talks was discussed, is of significance only to conspiracy theorists. He then went to David Steel, 'at *my* behest', to say he was reconsidering his position.

After that, he began a private process of discussing his change of mind with Liberal and CND members, in order not to be seen to undermine them with a sudden disclosure. He is clearly upset that his stance will be seen to damage the peace movement, who, he still believes, will be the key force in any move to disarmament. 'Clausewitz, the nineteenth century military historian, said "war is too important to leave to the generals." I have adapted that to: "Peace is too important to leave to the politicians".'

NONETHELESS, Paddy Ashdown does not want to be a creature of the peace movement. Not only does this not square with his personality; he must also have been aware, last February, that a politician who was seen to belong to the peace movement would not be taken seriously by the Geneva circus of foreign ministers and diplomats, let alone by his own party leaders. Before his change of mind he had, he says, 'been caught up the most appalling merry-go-round which I didn't know how to get off.'

But having sacrificed the warm support of the peace movement, has he actually gained for his party any increase in stature? In his own eyes, the influence of the Liberal Party (which has not formally adopted his position anyway) already seems to stretch into the Kremlin. For his argument is that support by the Liberals for the immediate withdrawal of cruise missiles will cause the Russians at Geneva to prevaricate, hoping for a more sympathetic British government in 1986. There would be delusions of grandeur here if he did not also say: 'I don't actually rate the chances of success of those talks very highly.'

So, if he can't single-handedly make the

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NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOME
NCH
85 Highbury Park, London N5 1UD

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Children in Danger Campaign,
National Children's Home,
85 Highbury Park, London N5 1UD.

Please send me details of the Children in Danger campaign.

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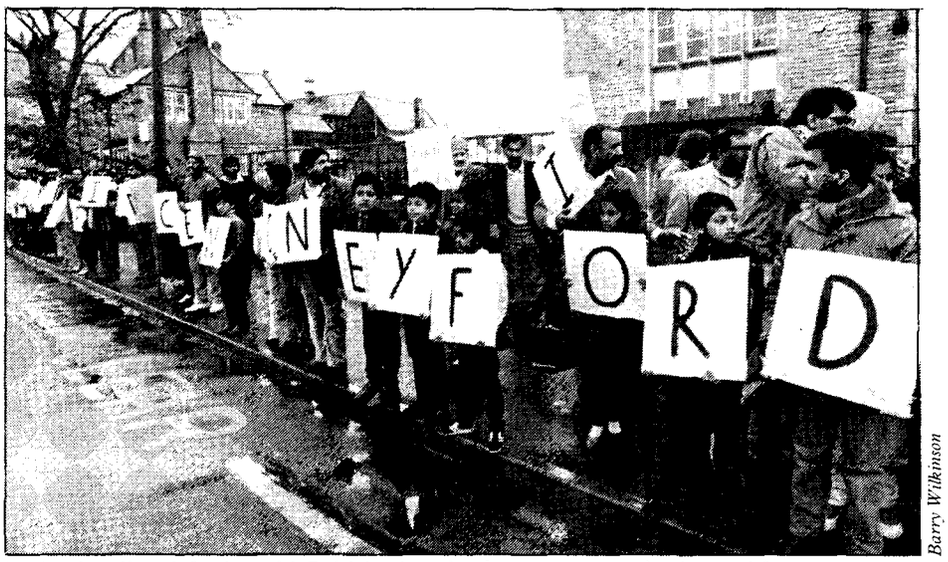
Geneva talks work, has he gained any concessions from David Owen? The reality of Owen, he says, is 'that you have to take him to the edge of the precipice and make him look over'.

Owen has now shifted much more than people realise. How? In what Ashdown describes as a 'deus ex cathedra pronouncement', Owen has accepted the idea of a freeze on further missile deployment. But in fact the SDP's policy is to go for a freeze *after* talks have failed in Geneva, a position which Ashdown says is illogical, reflecting the 'muddle' they are in on defence policy.

Yet, come the next election, Ashdown believes that only the Alliance parties — defence differences between them 'ground extremely small' — will be able to speak with pragmatic rationality, free of the 'ideological bunkers' in which the Labour and Conservative parties have immured themselves. Another scenario is that, by making his shift, Ashdown has helped lead his party onto safe conservative ground from which an unholy alliance of SDP, Liberals and Tories can isolate Labour as having no defence policy at all.

That will be a bitter outcome for a peace movement which has believed that the momentum of the disarmament campaign is both moral and infinitely more rational than the arms race. It would also be an ironic conclusion if in the Alliance election campaign Ashdown is cast either as a maverick, excluded from all defence responsibility, or as a man who will go far to appease David Owen. □



Barry Wilkinson

Will Asian dissatisfaction with British education increase separatist demands?

ISLAM

APARTHEID IN SCHOOLS IS WRONG

JOLYON JENKINS and MOHSIN A BANGASH take a critical look at the pressure for separate Muslim schools

NEWS THAT the London Borough of Brent may be about to get Britain's first voluntary-aided Muslim school, creates a problem for those who oppose racism. How can they oppose a reactionary educational ideology without appearing to ally themselves with some of the cruder responses on offer: for example an article in the *Sunday Express* headlined 'Why come here if they don't want to fit in?'.

In the last five years about a dozen private Muslim schools have been founded, usually under the auspices of the local mosque. But none has yet been granted voluntary-aided status, under which the local educational authority pays the staff and 85 per cent of capital costs, but the sponsoring church or, in this case, mosque controls two-thirds of the governors.

It is a privileged status which both the Christian and Jewish communities have made use of. So why should Muslims not share that privilege? But for many years in Britain there has been no concept of a specifically Christian or Jewish education. And those who are pressed to agree to separate Muslim schools may not realise that the demand comes mainly from self-appointed religious leaders who are largely funded from abroad and who have little support within the British Muslim community.

One of the leading figures in the movement for separate schools is Rashid Siddiqui, president of the UK Islamic Mission. A polite, charming man in his forties, who describes himself as a former communist, Siddiqui explains the rationale for separate Muslim education. Islam, he says, is not a subject which can be grafted on to an existing school curriculum, but a way of living — subject to the will of God — that must permeate all school activities. This goes further than an attempt to inculcate attitudes. It will shape the content of many courses. The curriculum will contain the same subjects, but they won't be taught in the same way. The teaching of the theory of evolution, for example, will contain not just the scientific objections to Darwinism, but also a specifically Islamic critique. Although Siddiqui says that this will only be 'a small part', it's difficult to see how it could fail to include a categorical statement that what science says is wrong.

And Siddiqui makes it clear that the schools will teach the different roles in life of men and women, the 'less rational, more emotional', nature of women and all the traditional Muslim virtues of modesty, chastity and obedience. They will also be taught the supremacy of the 'Sharia' (Islamic law).

Some younger British Muslims fear that educating Muslim children away from their white contemporaries will exacerbate racial tensions. Sarwar Bari, a postgraduate student at Sussex University who has also taught at schools here and in Pakistan, shares this fear. He agrees with Siddiqui that Muslim schools will create good and obedient citizens, but says: 'unfortunately, these docile citizens are the most vulnerable to racial attacks and political manipulation'. It's significant that the British National Party's official 'policy' is to support separate schools, a form of educational apartheid.

THE DEMAND for Muslim schools comes almost entirely from certain well-organised pressure groups: among them, the UK Islamic Mission, the Muslim School Trust, the Muslim Education Trust and other similar organisations in London, Leicester, Bradford and Birmingham.

In general they are headed or controlled by people who have been associated with the 'Jamaat Islami' (Islamic Party) of India and Pakistan — a very right-wing fundamentalist Islamic organisation which works for an Islamic revolution in the Indian subcontinent, and has links with the Muslim brotherhood of Egypt. Its support in the subcontinent comes mainly from small traders and other middle class groups. In Pakistan, it supports the Zia regime but has never been able to get more than a few seats in parliamentary elections.

These pressure groups belong to a Sunni sub-sect — the 'Deobandi' — which is particularly close to the official Saudi sect. Because of this, most of them receive money from the Saudi government, via a Saudi-sponsored group called the 'Muslim World League' (It is not to be confused — as it sometimes has been — with the Muslim World *Congress* which is a far-right group organised from Pakistan.) The Muslim World League has a budget set aside for religious education, and its assistant director, Dr Saleem, told the *NS* that in 1983-84 it donated £1 million to 35 mosques and religious schools in Britain. He would not name the groups, but Rashid Siddiqui confirms that the UK Islamic Mission has received League money, and Hasan Ahdal, director of the League, was a prominent participant in the Mission's Annual Conference this year.

But the Deobandis are in a minority among Britain's Muslims, most of whom — perhaps 80 per cent — belong to the 'Brelvi' sect. Brelvis are less self-consciously devout and intellectual, and are looked down upon by the Deobandi leaders..

Brelvi leaders have been highly critical of the Saudi government's religious policies: at a recent conference in London they accused the Saudis of 'misguiding the Muslim masses and specially Muslims in Britain by giving money'. The differences between the two sects have even led to violence and lawsuits, most recently in Manchester in a struggle over the control of a mosque.

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Not having rich foreign friends, the Brelvis are less able to lobby: they don't have big central organisations, which makes it more difficult for education authorities to negotiate and liaise with them. But they are strong at grass roots level, and organise around mosques and the 'Madaris' — the local schools that children go to after normal school. Mostly they are happy to keep Muslim education at this small, local level.

There are many such schools which teach the rudiments of Islam. Facilities are usually pretty basic: One in Euston is typical. Every evening at 6 o'clock, about 40 children sit on the floor in a damp basement, segregated by sex, and learn chunks of the Koran by rote, in Arabic.

So far, attempts to go further than this have failed. In Bradford there were moves two years ago to get five state schools where the children were predominantly Asian, converted to voluntary aided Muslim schools. Any proposal for doing this has to show that there's a local demand and that existing facilities will not be duplicated. At a series of public meetings in the schools it was clear that there was no great demand, and the proposals were rejected, amid claims from hardliners that the meetings had been rigged.

Full-time Islamic schools are not the norm even in Pakistan, a supposedly Islamic state. Where they do exist they are thought inferior because it's thought that they lessen pupils' chances of getting a good job in science or engineering. Rich middle-class, westernised Pakistanis have the same reservations as white liberals, and prefer to engage a religious teacher to come into the home once a week to instruct their children.

The argument pushed hardest by the lobbyists for separate schools is a simple equation that says all good Muslims should support Muslim schools. The increasing British climate of racial hostility may persuade less evangelical Muslims to believe it. It would be a pity if progressive education authorities eased the route into Muslim separatism in the belief it was anti-racist. □

GREENHAM

FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WIRE

TREVOR BROWN on the threat to residents around the US air base

WE NOW KNOW what plans the government has for who will be in charge during a war-time emergency. What I have found it much harder to establish, as a Liberal county councillor for the Greenham Common area, is who exercises authority during peace-time, and what the limits on USAF powers are.

My most recent case, where I still haven't had satisfactory answers from the County Secretary or RAF Commander at Greenham, was raised by a constituent when I was walking with her down a public footpath which comes out at Greenham Lodge Lake. The path is some distance from the Greenham perimeter fence. But it was being patrolled by a USAF policewoman carrying a gun. To my constituent's query about the gun, the policewoman replied 'Gee, it's only a 38.'

The County Secretary for Berkshire is investigating. Wing Commander Marsh of the RAF assures me that the path is on MoD property, as is the Bishop's Green housing estate where USAF personnel live, the publicly dedicated Bury's Bank Road along the North of the base and even New Road, the main access road from Newbury through the large private estate to the North.

I had assumed that while the USAF law enforcement officers had authority inside the fence, that authority did not extend to land outside, which British civilians use. But, according to the Commander, they derive such authority from the Visiting Forces Act which allows any one of 33 named foreign armed forces to act as if 'the force or headquarters formed part of the home forces.'

Quite apart from the tendentious issues of authority over land used by the public, we would not expect our home forces to patrol outside bases carrying sidearms. Nor would we expect members of any of the other 32 forces covered by the act, including Luxembourg, Australia, Trinidad and Tobago and Sierra Leone, to patrol outside a base carrying guns.

Confusion over who exercises authority in the area, over whom and how goes back at least ten years. In 1975, while drawing up the first Berkshire Structure Plans, there were so many central government restrictions around Greenham and the munitions base at Welford that I suggested setting up a Liaison Committee to bring together central and local government. My motion received all-party support, but the committee was born a weak and frail thing because Whitehall mandarins refused to take part.

So although the local committee worked hard, central government decided, for instance, to base squadrons of F-111 bombers at Greenham in 1977 without being confused by local knowledge. Important training programmes then had to be reduced by 80 per cent to avoid disrupting the schools they belatedly discovered lay under the flightpaths.

The 1981 announcement that Greenham was to be a cruise missile base was also made without the benefit of local authority comment on the effects on housing, highways, and policing. It took a year to convince the colonel-studded Thames Valley Police Authority that an important military base would be better protected by an adequate perimeter fence than by a police officer every ten yards. It took another year to convince the Home Office and MoD. When a better fence was at last erected the policing bill dropped from £3½m a year to a figure not identifiable in the accounts.

Perhaps the delay may have been related to the story told me by a Tory voter that his complaints to the MP about peace women had eventually produced the reply that 'Michael preferred them to stay' as they were an electoral asset. Support for this view came when the military authorities opened up the previously unused Pyle Hill Gate in late 1983. The peace women promptly established their 'Blue Gate' camp, which for the first time brought a camp close to residential houses. My suggestion at the Liaison Committee that closure of this gate would probably remove this annoyance to local residents drew a 'Good idea' reply from both the RAF and USAF commanders. But we were later told it had been vetoed 'at the highest level.' My comment that this could only mean Downing Street was received in glum silence by the officers.

The 1985 county election campaign was ferocious, with my Tory opponents making mis-statements on a scale that revealed their anxiety about critical voices on local democracy. My reminder to the electorate that the Tory Structure Plan proposals included an additional 500 houses at Greenham with no hope of adequate road access led to a Conservative press release claiming a reduction to 200. This figure was then denied by the Berkshire County Secretary. Earlier my Tory opponent had supported my suggestion that a possible compromise on the peace camps was to provide a 'dissent area' where the women would pay their way, not annoy local residents, and be able to keep clean and tidy. It was therefore a shock when Conservative election literature alleged that the Liberals wanted to give women a free camp on the rates. But it did give me the opportunity in my thank-you speech after the result to congratulate the Labour candidate on a clean and honest campaign.

BUT REPRESENTING the ratepayers of Greenham was made very difficult when the County Chairman, now supported by a larger Conservative majority than before, replaced me on the Greenham Liaison Committee by a Conservative councillor, hitherto mainly known for his support for NATO and for being the nephew of ex-cabinet minister James Prior. The Chairman defended his choice by saying we both had constituencies 'adjacent to the airbase.' A simple check with the County Secretariat would have told him that the other councillor's constituency was 'nowhere near.'

However, attending the Greenham Parish Council as their county councillor was an eye-opener about what they saw as the main nuisances in the parish. The media-fed national view is of hundreds of peace women depositing faeces and sanitary towels in citizens' gardens. But a priority order of nuisances would probably put USAF staff at the top of the list for playing giant stereos at 3 am for some years. 'If they can't find the volume controls on those, can they find the right buttons on those other things?' said one irate parish councillor.

Traffic problems caused by the base on ancient country roads distress both the police and the County Surveyor. Not that there's a shortage of money in the area, with $250m being spent on leisure and amenity facilities. The parish council has complained that a USAF water-tower and children's playground have been built across a public footpath. But we cannot afford a much needed lay-by in

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Greenham Road.

It was on this footpath that my constituent was surprised by the gun-toting American policewoman. But our own authorities are known to stretch the bounds of law on carrying weapons. Watching an eviction at a peace camp recently I asked the chief commons warden why he kept a fearsome wooden club in the cab of his waste-muncher. 'To hold the accelerator down' was his first answer. When I cast doubt on this he added it was for use against the peace women's dogs. 'He threatens us with it' said the women who were standing by.

And this is all in the name of defending our democracy and our sovereignty. □

Trevor Brown is a Liberal County Councillor in Berkshire.

LIVERPOOL

HOW NOT TO MAKE FRIENDS

IAN WILLIAMS looks at the latest twists in the tactics of Merseyside's Militant councillors

AS LIVERPOOL'S Militant-dominated leaders move into the final stages of the confrontation they have worked so hard for, the problem looms larger and larger: just who is confronting whom? The city workforce which was pledged to strike to *support* the city councillors, has been threatening to strike *against* them if they don't withdraw the redundancy notices to 30,000 workers which the Council, pledged to an 'Illegal Budget', wanted to issue in order to stay legal. The Illegal Budget, was to defend jobs and services.

Two separate issues threaten the councillors themselves. First there is the £106,000 surcharge which the district auditor has laid upon them as the price for their delay in setting a rate. Then there are the problems that will arise from a rate increase of 9 per cent instead of 20 per cent. The money would run out on 18 December, if £23 million is set aside for 'redundancy' payments.

The unions have said that they will strike if anyone gets made redundant, so there have been some unconvincing contortions to prove that redundancy notices aren't *really* redundancy notices at all, since everyone will have a promise of re-employment on 1 April. Maybe the unions have noticed that this is April Fool's day, since they can't understand why, in that case, money was being indentified for redundancy pay, despite a unanimous district Labour Party decision against.

The city's joint shop stewards' committee decided to blockade the city council meeting on 16 September, due to discuss the redundancy notices. The meeting was cancelled, and Labour councillors joined the picket line, leaving Deputy Leader Derek Hatton claiming that this showed the 'absolute unity of the movement in Liverpool'. (NALGO had, anyway, refused to send out the notices. This will provoke a withdrawal of credit from the banks, so that cash may run out in a fortnight.) To complicate matters even further, the joint shop stewards' committee at the blockade went on to recommend to the workforce that they should come out on indefinite strike from 25 September — in support of the council.

UNTIL NOW, the implications of the strategy adopted have not been discussed except in the most general confrontational terms. This was fed by the genuine feeling among ordinary Liverpool Labour members that the city has been shortchanged by the Liberals, by successive central governments, and indeed by capitalism as a whole.

The Militant leadership caught the popular mood, but it had its own reasons. Militant nationally was engaged in a political macho competition, which meant that to keep the Tendency's end up nationally Liverpool had to last longer than Sheffield, the GLC and Lambeth. Once the Blunketts and Livingstones could be called 'Traitors to the Working Class', it was then possible to discover that not setting a rate was only a tactic after all, and so a 9 per cent increase was fixed.

But there is still confusion over how it was fixed. Certainly 20 per cent was the figure originally favoured, but within days of that decision being taken the Party was 'bounced' down into the 9 per cent increase which, with penalties, means that the Council is now running out of money. Several councillors are convinced that the Militant leadership didn't expect to get a majority in the council but they had in fact underestimated the combativeness of many Labour members.

Denis Doran

Liverpool's Hatton: more rhetoric than political activity

The possible Endgames vary from messy to improbable. On the top line, the government could recognise Liverpool's special problems and send lots of money. Or it could authorise borrowing to see the year out. Since in response to Hatton's jumping on Jenkin's political grave after last year's 'solution' ministers have refused even to meet the city leadership, the government is not likely to bend.

Liverpool grinding to a halt, whether by redundancy or by union action, would stop the jobs and services which the city's campaign is supposed to be about. Possibly using up capital would solve the problems for this year at least, at the expense of next year's housing programme, but that would be seen as a climbdown, not least by Tony Byrne, the council's financial supremo, who is rumoured to have municipal housing engraved on his heart.

Someone getting a court order to set aside the rate would get everyone off the hook. It is possible — but unlikely — that even then the Council would defy such a court order. The Tendency has got what it wanted: to be the last in the race with lots of enemies within to blame. But it may yet again underestimate the belligerency of ordinary Labour members, who are showing signs of exhaustion with rhetoric and denunciation masquerading as political activity.

TO MAKE THE battle even more dubious, the Council's Militants seem to have specialised in making enemies. Housing Co-ops, ethnic groups, the joint shop stewards' committee and the trades council have all been in dispute with the Council.

The Samson Bond issue, now a year old, has illustrated all the weaknesses of a small centralised group making rigidly dogmatic decisions and refusing to listen to anyone else. It explains simultaneously why the implications of the Budget are so unclear, and why the initial support for the council is waning. Since the last *NS* report on this, Councillor Margaret Simey, who's been trying to sack Merseyside's Chief Constable, has been accused of being in cahoots with him and the Tories. Councillor Alex Doswell, Secretary of the Trades Council and himself under notice from the district auditor, was accused by Derek Hatton of being 'wittingly or otherwise, a supporter of violence and the Tories', while the Community Relations Council has been threatened with having its funding cut off unless it 'publicly deplores' alleged violence by the Black Caucus.

The affair moved into the realm of surrealism when the Militant City Council leadership pulled out of a demonstration it had sponsored on 7 September, because the Black Caucus would be on the march. In a measured contrast, Shaun Deckon for the black community pledged support for the city's campaign against unemployment.

At the very least, there is little doubt that the official history of the budget campaign when it is published by Militant will be apportioning blame for any failure on the Caucus and its supporters. But the voters and even the Councillors, who have put their homes and belongings on the line, would rather have results than excuses.

Kinnock's refusal of support plays right into the hands of the Tendency, by repudiating the genuine bravery and sacrifice of the 49 councillors, of whom very few are in the Tendency. His hasty reactions will help Militant retain their grip over ordinary members, who will contrast the dedication — no matter how ill-advised — of their own councillors with the complacency of most of the Parliamentary Labour Party. □

Ian Williams is a member of Liverpool Labour Party.

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MEDIA

Moonlit shenanigans at the BBC's gates

FRANCIS WHEEN

'WASTE BY MOONLIGHT at the BBC' was the headline over a story by Nick Rosen published in the *Mail on Sunday* on 8 September. It was, of course, yet another Beeb-bashing piece. But what distinguished this one was that it included more inaccuracies than almost any other newspaper article in the history of . . . well, let's say the past month or so. Last week's *Mail on Sunday* printed a short letter from the BBC, which corrected a few of the errors; but even this left most of them unchallenged. Let's take the article point by point.

Firstly, there's the 'moonlight' referred to, rather mystifyingly, in the headline. 'A dedicated cutter,' Rosen's article explains, 'would find plenty for his [*sic*] scythe in the overgrown BBC fields. He could start, for example, on the night of the full moon when Broadcasting House in Portland Place, London, doubles its security guards — the theory being that there are more maniacs at that time of the month trying to break in.' A jolly idea but also, regrettably, a complete fabrication.

Rosen's purpose in telling the 'moonlight' story is to prove to his readers that the BBC is disgracefully profligate. In case they're not yet convinced, he backs it up with many other examples of 'waste' — such as 'the leather armpatch allowance for directors (two per annum)'. Again, an entertaining idea; again, however, a figment of Rosen's imagination.

'The huge personnel department never forgets a birthday, and sends each new BBC mother a cheque for £50.' The personnel department certainly has a record of employees' dates of birth — hardly an unusual business practice, I should have thought — but the implication that it sends staff birthday cards is another of Rosen's fantasies. The claim that every new 'BBC mother' gets a cheque for £50 is untrue as well.

'The architects' department has 530 designers, surveyors and architects occupying magnificent offices.' In fact, the architects' department has 220 staff. The magnificence of the offices is, I suppose, in the eye of the beholder.

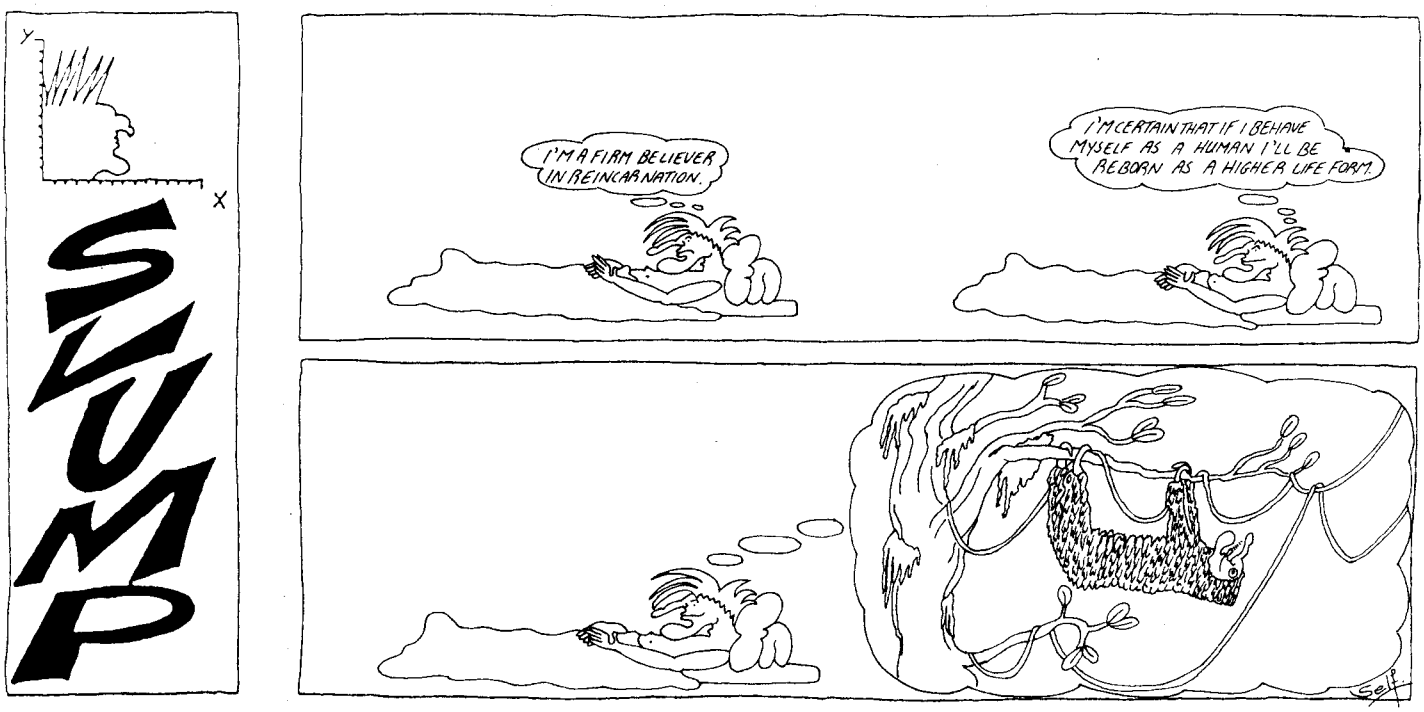
'Then there is the BBC driving licence giving holders the right to drive BBC vehicles anywhere in the world after passing a test said to be much easier than the Ministry of Transport version.' There is no such thing. 'If BBC employees want a holiday the BBC travel department arranges tickets and visas for them.' It doesn't.

'One of the more bizarre extravagancies [*sic*] at the BBC is the unusual unit of measurement, the BBC foot. The architecture department uses specially made rulers, squares and tape measures — because the BBC foot is only 11.8in.' Oh dear. What Rosen seems to be thinking of is the measurement called the 'studio unit', which is the size of the little squares that make up a grid on a studio floor. This is indeed 11.8 inches — or, to be rather less eccentric about it, 30 centimetres. There are no 'specially made' rulers, for the simple reason that you can use any old ruler to measure 30cm.

And so it goes on. Rosen's final suggestion is that if the BBC wants to cut its staff numbers, 'possibly the most fruitful area of inquiry would be the admissions and personnel departments — more than 1,000 people between them, or one for every 29 employees — even if it does mean a few birthdays would be forgotten.' The BBC doesn't have an 'admissions department'; but if you add together all staff in personnel, management training, recruitment, appointments and job evaluation, you get a total which is roughly half the size of that cited by Rosen.

What sticks in the gullet is not criticisms of the BBC which could, God knows, be reformed, but the dishonesty of the methods used to discredit the BBC by the papers owned by Murdoch, Matthews and Maxwell (and now, it seems, Associated Newspapers as well). These papers are not interested in reasoned discussion about the BBC's future; they prefer to stick to gross slurs, such as Rosen's depiction of the Corporation as a ridiculously over-generous employer. Anyone who has worked for the BBC will recognise the absurdity of this picture. The take-home pay of a BBC employee is, on average, at least 30 per cent lower than the pay of an equivalent person working for commercial television; and not even a birthday card or a leather-patch allowance to compensate for it!

Finally, a word about the author of this piece of disinformation, Nick Rosen (who is, by the way, Robert Maxwell's nephew). Earlier this year, before he decamped to the *Mail on Sunday*, Rosen edited a magazine called *Tomorrow*, which he founded with his lover, the fashion designer Katharine Hamnett. Only one issue of the magazine ever appeared. Articles for the second issue were commissioned and written, but at the last minute Rosen and Hamnett abandoned the project. Nevertheless, Rosen promised that contributors would be paid. The promise has not been kept. If Nick Rosen wishes to lecture the BBC about the duties of a good employer, he might care to put his own house in order first. □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SLUMP
I'M A FIRM BELIEVER IN REINCARNATION.
I'M CERTAIN THAT IF I BEHAVE MYSELF AS A HUMAN I'LL BE REBORN AS A HIGHER LIFE FORM.
Self

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DIARY

I talked on the phone to Benjamin Zephaniah about Handsworth. Born and bred there, he's among our best Rasta artists: Arena has just published a book of his poems, *The Dread Affair*, for £2.95. It includes 'Nice one Handsworth', a fantastic and telling poem that in its way celebrates community policing. Zephaniah said that the police used to be 'really heavy and basically we were really mad and used to tear down the place'. Then David Webb arrived. 'I've had a lot of trouble, but he's one policeman I respect.'

finding a way to solve the situation
one time mean and now so kind

'When I came to London police would hear my Birmingham accent and say: "We don't have Webb down here, we'll get you".' Zephaniah insists that blacks have always used grass, if only for medicinal purposes and that it should be decriminalised. 'It's just another plant and it's a human right to use it.' Making even possession criminal forces it into the hands of mafias, and that's what leads to people pushing it in the street, 'which I hate'.

○

Handsworth should give quite an edge to the arguments over black sections at the Labour Party conference. I have been surprised by the extent of the opposition to black sections even on the Left. It seems to me that once again the Labour Party is drawing attention to itself by stamping on its own foot. If blacks want sections, they should have them. Fear of 'apartheid' is absurd, since the whole point of joining the Labour Party is to integrate change. Instead of being relaxed about itself, Labour has typically created a spurious issue that doesn't touch upon the real problems but which nonetheless maximises its own discomfort. Not that there isn't a nasty current of black separatism about — which will, of course, be encouraged by the unnecessary dispute in Labour's ranks.

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I do not mean Rastafarianism: a religion with its own beliefs. But I am appalled by the current prejudice against trans-racial fostering and adoption. On his Sunday programme 'The Heart of the Matter' David Jessel said that in the '60s we believed that adoption would overcome racial antagonism. Nonsense. The famous decade may not have been very numerate, but you hardly need to count to realise that white adoption of black children, never that easy anyway, could not 'solve' a massive social problem. The point was that it challenged prejudice. Now we are being told that black children growing up with white parents may lack 'a sense of racial identity' and that this will cause them pain. Is it such a bad thing that one's identity is a matter of personal crisis when growing up? The logic of insisting upon racially homogeneous adoption is that interracial parenthood should also be banned, as it will give children of mixed races problems. It is time to make the point that one can be a deeply rooted cosmopolitan.

○

I was fascinated to read that President Marcos of the Philippines has heard voices telling him to continue in office. With all the arguments raging about ballots, proportional representation and block votes, this is an important contribution to democratic calculation. He was speaking on the occasion of his 68th birthday, where they sang from Handel's *Messiah* — 'And he shall reign for ever and ever'. Marcos won't, of course. Yet when Richard Gott launched his three-part barrage from the pages of the *Guardian* last month, hailing the Philippines as a future Cuba or Nicaragua, I shook my head in disbelief. But last week a Filipino friend assured me that the scene has indeed been completely transformed, even in remote islands of the archipelago, since the assassination of Aquino. If the Americans continue to support Marcos and the military, then indeed polarisation will continue and the guerrillas of the New People's Army may well sweep to power. For opinion and support has shifted massively in their favour. The irony is, I was told, that Marcos himself did not actually order Aquino's death. Rumour — perhaps much more than rumour — has it that he was actually under post-operative anaesthetic at the time. For Marcos was undergoing a kidney transplant. No one knew if it would take. *That's* why Aquino wanted to be in the Philippines, so as to be on the spot if Marcos failed to survive — and equally why General Ver and Mrs Marcos did not want him around.

Rumour also has it, but I regard this a touch of colour, that the transplant was a success because the kidney came from one of the President's illegitimate sons. Has it lasted

'forever', has Marcos had a second transplant already? Apparently the world record is five. Such speculation is no joke. When US intelligence learnt the Shah of Iran had cancer it affected policy. A sick dictator, massive discontent, huge US bases: Richard Gott could be right, these are the ingredients that might spoil the last period of the Reagan Administration.

○

So the Communists, perhaps I should say the Euro-Communists, are going to call their new weekly *Seven Days*. Edited by Chris Myant, it will take on the *Morning Star* and doubtless overtake it in domestic circulation. The name is not new. It is borrowed, if I may say so, from the heroic and fabulous *7 Days* of the early '70s. A true seven day wonder, with which I had something to do, and a photo-news weekly that became a model of left-wing journalism as its little drop of money ran out.

The name was in turn a salute to Claud Cockburn's *The Week* — along with John Berger and Stuart Hood, Cockburn was one of the paper's three trustees. So I suppose the CP has some claim to the mantle even if Claud himself would have been hilariously scathing about British Euro-Communism. There are formidable problems to the creation of a new weekly that does not just preach to the converted. *City Limits* managed it in London, by the skin of its teeth and a GLC loan. Will the new *Seven Days* succeed? The old one ended with an angry piece that denounced the *New Statesman*, where Richard Crossman had just been ousted as editor. Openly jealous of Great Turnstile's accumulation of capital, *7 Days* commented that, while Crossman lacked even the zest of opportunism, 'bankruptcy of ideas doesn't mean insolvency'. It concluded that the past will continue to lay its heavy hand upon the future. So good luck to its successor and it will need it without Moscow gold.

Islander

ROGER WODDIS

Skipping song

Spies and moles come out to play,
The secret agents are blown away.
They've left some gaps in the Kremlin wall
And maddened the chaps who run Whitehall.

Save your faces and wave your flags,
And try to smile when you pack your bags.
There's more to this than meets the eye,
But never admit that you're a spy.

As a journalist or a diplomat,
Feel free to spit at this tit-for-tat.
Condemn the system that you detest,
While building bridges from east to west.

Security and the threatened State
Give ample cause to retaliate,
Though hear the voice on the Clapham bus:
'Don't see that it makes any odds to us.'

We now discover, when they skip,
The secret of one-upmanship,
A game that any two can play:
You can't believe a word they say.

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WHITES JOIN THE CHICKEN RUN

As the South African economy collapses and the Botha government shows signs of losing control, the whites are reacting by swinging politically to the Right — or preparing to get out. PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK reports

Camera Press

Auction time: when whites fled Zimbabwe they left behind their goods and chattels. Could the same be happening in South Africa?

Johannesburg

THE GREAT WHITE South African dream of affluence, privilege and stability has been one major casualty of the black revolt sweeping the country and the consequent political and economic crisis.

Gone forever is white South Africa's golden heyday when, in the 1960s, Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd's brutal silencing of black resistance appeared permanent and the economy was booming. In recent months the township rebellion, international hostility, economic depression and financial instability have posed a fundamental crisis for the whites and the ruling National Party (NP). While white politics have been sidelined by these issues, five by-elections are looming with major implications for the NP's popular support among whites.

Four of the five by-elections are in Afrikaans-speaking constituencies and could indicate the extent to which support has increased for the ultra right-wing parties. Both the far-right wing Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP) and the Conservative Party (CP), which split from the Nationalists in 1981, claim a massive increase in support as a result of a backlash against black protest and the belief that the government's reforms are a betrayal of the whites.

In affluent English-speaking suburbia, the reaction is somewhat different. Increasing numbers of people are cashing in on claims for foreign passports, packing their bags and joining the 'chicken run' out of the country. The British, Australian, Canadian and American consulates have been snowed under with queries for immigration visas and the property market in the plush northern suburbs of Johannesburg has slumped. Dubious agencies offering advice on how to acquire foreign passports for a price have sprung up. At present the low exchange value of the Rand is, however, restraining many wealthy whites from leaving the country.

The End Conscription Campaign, an affiliate of the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front (UDF), says that a major reason for leaving is the use of national servicemen to quell the protest in the townships.

Young white conscripts have no choice but to serve for two years in the military and many find themselves drafted into violent suppression of their fellow countrypeople in the black townships. In January this year, more than 7,500 men did not report for their military service, a jump from the previous average of about 3,000, and a sign that many find the prospect of service in the townships unpalatable.

THE AGONISED DEBATE over whether to stay or leave South Africa is particularly fierce within the small white Left where many hold it as their duty to stay in the country and use the skills they have acquired as privileged citizens to fight apartheid. Though the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) rejects a role for whites in the struggle, several small white organisations have affiliated to the non-racial UDF and individual whites hold key positions in the democratic trade union movement.

The Johannesburg Democratic Committee, a UDF affiliate of progressive whites, has been hard-hit by the repression which has followed the state of emergency with key leaders being detained or forced into hiding. Though its support is gradually increasing as people react in horror to the reality of government repression in the townships, the white Left remains a fringe group both within black and white politics.

The real feel of white politics will be expressed on 30 October when voters go to the polls in the mini-election for five seats at present held by the National Party. 'The NP has lost contact with its grassroots supporters,' says Professor Willem Kleynhans, head of political science at the University of South Africa. 'Their support is eroding to the right every day.'

In the industrial northern Free State town of Sasolburg, for instance, a grim by-election struggle is being fought in a straight contest between the NP and the HNP. Since its formation in 1969, the HNP has fought and lost about 350 parliamentary contests — probably a world record for electoral failure. But indications are that in Sasolburg the party's extreme perseverance has a chance of bearing fruit.

The HNP's call for a return to the golden era of Dr Hendrik Verwoerd is faring well against the other voting tendencies — those who will vote NP out of habit, those who will vote NP because they believe some reform is necessary to overcome the crisis and the growing numbers who believe the country is in such a mess that there is no point in voting at all. The scrapping of petty apartheid measures, rejected among blacks and the outside world as woefully insufficient, are seen by HNP supporters as a fundamental betrayal of white power.

The Conservatives, who stand a realistic chance of winning at least three of the seats, and the HNP are cashing in on the belief among many white voters that the government has been too 'soft' in countering the black protest. Depression and unemployment have hit working-class whites severely, with stories of white children begging outside supermarkets being used to illustrate the extent of the government's betrayal of whites.

Sources close to the government have claimed that President P.W. Botha drew back from what he intended to announce in the much-slated Durban speech on 15 August after receiving a report from the constituencies that

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he would lose all five seats if he went ahead. However, the financial crisis and American sanctions which the Durban speech precipitated was an even bigger pressure on the government to make decisive reform announcements on black citizenship and influx control.

Professor Kleynhans says that by having to pander to an increasingly reactionary white constituency, President P.W. Botha is in a difficult dilemma. He has to choose between what is necessary to retain white support and win the by-elections, on the one hand, and staving off sanctions and easing the political and economic crisis on the other. In the process he appears to be satisfying no one.

With their allies in the West turning their backs on Pretoria, and prominent business leaders meeting with the African National Congress and calling for Botha's resignation, the loss of the white support base could undermine Botha's nationalist government very suddenly. □

UNITED STATES

WHITE HOUSE WINS ON NERVE GAS

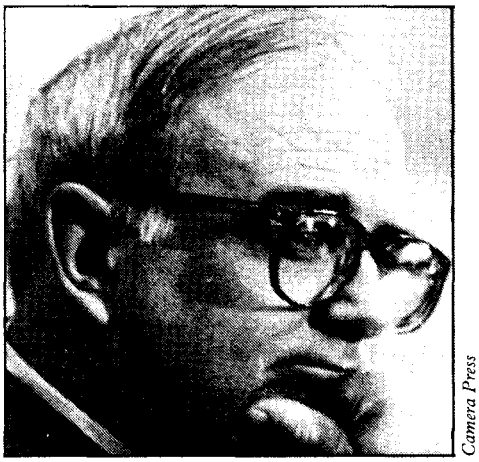
CLAUDIA WRIGHT on the Administration's new ally in its campaign for a new gas weapon

Washington

THE UNITED STATES ARMY has been developing a complicated new bomb called the *Bigeye*. Inside the bomb a chemical reaction forms a gas, called *QX* for short. This is colourless and odourless and, when absorbed through the skin, attacks the nerve junctions. Less than half a milligram can be very unpleasant. You lose control of the muscles, beginning with spasms, convulsions, vomiting, unstoppable defecation, and then you suffocate to death because the diaphragm won't work.

For several years the Reagan Administration has been trying to obtain the funds from Congress to begin building the *Bigeye* and similar chemical shells for 155-mm field guns, and end the moratorium on producing chemical weapons the Nixon Administration imposed in 1969. Three times the Democratic House of Representatives said no — binary chemical weapons were the *only* weapons Congress refused to give the President in his first term. This year, however, the chair of the House Armed Services Committee and a seeming opponent of binary weapons production in the past, helped the Administration to victory.

The member of Congress is Les Aspin, from Wisconsin, an Oxford and Ivy League-trained economist, and a Congressman for 15 years. There is no one in Washington who doesn't acknowledge how clever Aspin is. His aides say



Camera Press

Les Aspin: nerve gas's surprising new friend on Capitol Hill

he assesses every major weapons procurement request from the Pentagon and judges the arms control implications of weapons procurement himself.

As a consequence, Aspin has understood better than most in Congress that the technical and cost efficiency of the new binary weapons is seriously in doubt; and that US production would set back any chance of an agreement on withdrawing existing US and Soviet chemical weapons from Central Europe and then dismantling stockpiles — an agreement that was within reach until the Reagan Administration came to power. Aspin has also known that deployment of the new weapons makes military sense only in Germany, but that public opinion there is so hostile that the Kohl government is afraid even secretly to endorse the Reagan attempt to build the new weapons.

ASPIN'S RECENT decision to support the Administration's request for chemical weapons has thus run into all sorts of trouble. In June the Republican-dominated House of Representatives voted narrowly to accept the Administration request for binary chemical weapons but only on conditions that would delay production of the chemical components and assembly of the weapons until late 1987 — allowing time for negotiations with the Soviet Union — and then permit assembly only if the members of NATO formally requested the US to prepare the weapons and agreed to deployment on NATO (in particular, West Germany) territory. Since the frail Kohl coalition faces elections in 1987, no one in Washington believes NATO/Bonn would dare provoke the public controversy of such a decision. Thus, the Congressional condition was a way of blocking new chemical weapons while not quite appearing to be doing so.

But in July, when Aspin took these conditions to the conference of House and Senate representatives that has to resolve differences between the Bills passed in each chamber, he agreed to drop them and put a placebo in their place. The US army can start producing the chemicals almost immediately and, instead of a formal NATO agreement, all the Administration would have to do is to 'consult' with NATO officials before drawing up a plan for deploying the weapons in Germany. Aspin claims that in the closed-door conference the Senate members said they had been told by the Germans that the Kohl government could accept deployment of chemical weapons but not out in the open, as the House condition required.

The conference ended on 26 July, and since then Aspin has been claiming that a compromise on the NATO condition was unavoidable. The arithmetic of the votes suggests otherwise. Even in the Senate, the vote to block production of binary weapons (and incidentally urge the Administration to intensify its negotiating efforts with the Soviets) failed by just four votes, 46 to 50. With such slim support for chemical weapons in the Republican Senate, Aspin could have stuck with the House version. The fact that he didn't reflects his own support for the Administration position. His attempts to appear otherwise convinced no one who was watching closely. Aspin managed to win the chair of the Armed Services Committee at the beginning of the year — over considerable opposition — by intimating to Pentagon critics that he would be a vigorous opponent of Administration defence spending. He won by just three votes.

BUT ASPIN HAS over-estimated his own cleverness — his newly acquired conservative friends are outnumbered by the enemies his shiftiness has created. He has also alienated a large number of House Democrats who attack him now for abandoning the freeze on Pentagon spending for next year and letting Senate Republicans raise the total by another $10 billion.

On 10 September, with help from the House speaker, Tip O'Neill — who originally opposed Aspin for the chair and savours his revenge — Aspin's opponents forced him to make a huge concession — to allow the Appropriations Committee to reconsider Aspin's earlier concessions and cut the overall defence budget, in all likelihood eliminating the funds for chemical weapons in the process.

Then last week, when the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, announced in a meeting with the German Social Democratic party leader, Johannes Rau, that the Soviets would agree to withdraw their chemical weapons from Eastern Europe, if the US did the same from Germany (creating a chemical arms-free zone in the region) Aspin sided with the White House in rejecting the proposal.

Aspin has told the *NS* that he considers the chemical weapons issue unimportant beside nuclear arms negotiations and he says a chemical arms-free zone is a 'meaningless gesture'. He accepts the Administration's claim that the US must match the upgrading of Soviet chemical weapons — a point even Administration-sponsored studies dispute — and insists, as the White House has done, on the difficulty of verifying an arms-free zone agreement; US scientific experts and arms negotiators say verification is no longer a problem.

At bottom, Aspin opposes any attempt by the European states to break out of the arms negotiating framework set by the superpowers. While conceding that Western European support for a chemical arms-free zone predates Russian interest, he implies that the Gorbachev endorsement is just a ploy to divert US attention away from 'serious' negotiating on nuclear weapons. Few Democrats have thought much about chemical warfare — those who have lack the political gumption to challenge Aspin's appeal to superpower chauvinism.

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That is one reason why the Democrats have been so feeble in opposition to Reagan arms policy — the White House knows how to make opportunists like Aspin dance to a patriotic tune.

In the words of a Democrat leader in the House: 'he's been dancing with the guys who fought him, not with the guys who put him there'. □

DUMPING

BRITAIN IS IN THE DOCK

The three year ban on nuclear waste dumping at sea is being reviewed in London. The British government tried to ignore it and now wants it lifted, writes JANE DIBBLIN

> The vast majority of these seven *billion* casualties would be incurred by non-dumping nations. In other words, the massive human cost of sea dumping will be borne not by the nations who chose to pursue nuclear options, but rather by the rest of the world, who had no say in the policies . . .

THIS CLAIM COMES from a statement to the London Dumping Convention, which meets for its ninth session next week. It is being submitted by Nauru, a tiny South Pacific island nation, which in 1983 along with its sister island Kiribati, proposed a permanent ban on dumping radioactive waste at sea. The nuclear nations, predictably, blocked the move, and settled on a compromise solution offered by Spain — a temporary moratorium while a 'panel of experts' drew up a scientific report.

On seeing an interim report from these experts, Nauru commissioned its own scientists. They point out that the experts' prediction of 100,000 deaths is based on the assumption of dumping in only one ocean basin instead of ten (which is more likely) and at a level well below that previously allowed.

If these and other extra factors are taken into consideration, over a 500 year time span (a reasonable time for estimation given the amount of waste waiting to be dumped and the length of time the material remains radioactive) there could be four billion deaths and another three billion cases of severe hereditary damage and non-fatal cancers — a total greater than the present world population.

Yet the major dumping nations — Japan, the US and Britain — want to vote to resume dumping. Britain is the worst culprit, responsible for 95 per cent of all radioactive waste so far dumped at sea. Mrs Thatcher's government also decided to ignore the 1983 moratorium and continue dumping (membership of the Convention is voluntary and its agreements are not binding), but the transport unions refused to allow it. At this month's TUC conference, Ray Buckton for the unions promised to protest to the government 'at the highest level' if Britain votes to resume dumping before the government's own study of the risks involved is complete.

The study — a report on the 'Best Practicable Environmental Options' — led by Professor Fred Holliday, Vice-Chancellor of Durham University — was commissioned to mollify the transport unions. The government hoped that it would be out before the Convention met and that it would 'prove' Britain's case for sea dumping.

In August, however, representatives of Friends of the Earth (FoE) met Holliday — only to find that they had only covered nine out of 30 types of nuclear waste. Holliday assured FoE that they would be looking at the rest — and hoped to be finished by December.

The British government is faced with the political embarrassment of voting in favour of dumping before its own report is out. The Department of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture are arguing it out: the report comes under the aegis of the DoE, but the British delegation will be comprised mainly from 'Ag and Fish'. FoE director Jonathon Porritt has already written to William Waldegrave, newly promoted Minister of State for the Environment, asserting that a 'yes' vote in favour of dumping now 'would seriously undermine the status and credibility of the finished study'.

The UK, though, is likely to go for a lifting of the ban, but will wait to see how things lie when other delegations arrive. Japan is keen to develop its nuclear industry — it already has 24 functioning nuclear reactors and another 30 are planned to be in operation by 1990. Local environmental groups are making it difficult to store the waste on land — calling the nuclear industry 'a mansion without toilets'. Japan has been going for the 'out of sight, out of mind' option of sea dumping for 14 years.

Sheila Gray/Format

Maria Pengelinan: 'The Marianas people are resolved to defend the lives of generations to come. We will litigate wherever we have to, to stop the dumping.'

Japan's 1983 decision to dump in the Marianas trench, north of the Marianas islands in the northwest Pacific, prompted the Pacific nations to demand a ban. No study has been done on the effects of dumping radioactive waste in the shallow waters of Tokyo Bay for the last 14 years. Since there has been no such monitoring, the non-nuclear nations are highly sceptical about 'expert' predictions on safety.

Sheila Gray/Format

Jacoba Semana: 'Scientists may come up with beautiful statements to "prove" sea dumping is "harmless" — but this is also a moral issue. This garbage belongs to the nuclear powers — let them dispose of it in *their* lands, not in our backyard.'

Japan is now standing by with 520,000 barrels of radioactive waste waiting to go into the Marianas trench. Representatives of its Science and Technology Agency have already said they would go ahead, ban or no ban. After an uproar in the Pacific their line changed to 'with the understanding' of the Pacific nations.

The US has been dumping in the Pacific and the Atlantic since 1946. It needs to dispose of more than 100 aging nuclear submarines.

Which way the vote will finally go hangs in the balance — by as little as one or two votes, observers believe. Morocco, Spain and Ireland, for example, must be worried about Britain's Northeast Atlantic dump site; the Pacific nations are fairly unanimous as they stand to suffer most (Australia just secured voting rights last week and is expected to support a ban).

On the other side, supporting the UK, US and Japan in their bid to resume dumping, will be South Africa and probably the Netherlands, also with big problems of its own over nuclear waste disposal. The Netherlands has quietly been investigating a site in the Caribbean recently with a view to dropping high-level waste in 'torpedoes' onto the sea bed.

A two thirds majority of the 58 nations is needed to win a permanent moratorium. The Canadian chair would prefer to reach a consensus — perhaps on another temporary ban while studies continue. This, though, would not be enough to satisfy the opponents, who fear that their momentum could be lost.

If there is a permanent ban, individual countries have the right to lodge an objection within 100 days, thus exempting themselves from the ruling. However, the International Transport Unions Federation is putting its full weight behind a ban and could force dumping nations to toe the line. □

The Convention takes place 23-27 September at the International Maritime Organisation, 4 Albert Embankment, SE1. Greenham Women are organising a 'creative presence' outside. Jacoba Semana and Maria Pengelinan from the Marianas Islands will be attending as members of the FOE delegation.

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LETTERS

Nice Neil — a real natural

Keith Haviland, London W4

I would agree with Anthony Barnett (*NS* 13 September) that the lack of a cohesive framework of ideas behind the Labour Party's current facade is lamentable. But it is Labour itself, and much of the Left in general, that has seemed so often to lack any kind of coherent intellectual identity. Neil Kinnock was the natural choice for leader precisely because he presented a vote-winning image, not too heavily tainted by any identifiable ideology, capable of irritating the divisions within the Party.

Ultimately, it is Labour's lack of a cohesive, solidly based strategy, and not Kinnock's leadership, that forces it to present itself merely as an alternative to Thatcherism. (This is doubly ironic since Thatcherism is only a reaction itself, driven by the narrowest of visions and spite. The notion of Thatcherism as anything like a system of ideas owes more to the Left than the Right.)

If Kinnock indeed lacks ideas then, as far as Labour is concerned, he truly is 'of this age, for this age'. This said, I also feel that Anthony Barnett underestimates Kinnock, who in the past has had a 'good' record on many issues and has now — almost — turned Labour into a force capable of winning power; this is a remarkable achievement given the condition of the Party he took over. It would also seem to me to vindicate his personal, folksy approach. Perhaps, now, with his leadership established and Labour a believable contender for power, we will actually see the policies and ideas Anthony Barnett wants.

AIDS: not about lifestyle

Richard Edwards, Boston, USA

What on earth does Veronica Groocock mean when she says that AIDS is 'a product of the lifestyle of a much wider spectrum of society' than the gay community alone (*NS* 30 August)?

One cannot assess the impact of AIDS outside the gay minority in Britain simply by interviewing, as Ms Groocock did, the wives of sexually active gay men, or by documenting the risks of contracting AIDS through artificial insemination by (gay) donor. That Ms Groocock felt able to attribute AIDS to the ill-defined concept of 'lifestyle' betrayed an appalling misunderstanding of the complexity of the AIDS problem. Can haemophilia, for example, be considered a 'lifestyle'.

By confining her analysis to people directly involved with gay men, Ms Groocock has simply perpetuated the view of AIDS as a disease spread by homosexuals. Indeed, the article was in many respects barely less accusatory than any of the worst examples of AIDS reporting in the popular press. Had she wanted to examine the impact of AIDS outside the gay community Ms Groocock might have considered the potential problems posed, for example, by paediatric AIDS cases, which may soon be as serious a problem in Britain as it is in the United States.

What, no strike cover?

Tom Snow, London SE22

For a split second I thought the *New Statesman* had decided to give the Addenbrookes Hospital strike the coverage it has so long deserved — and lacked. But then I realised — with quite some anger I can tell you — that the mother and daughter pictured on page 15 (*NS* 13 September) were no more than the supporting cast in a piece about Neil Kinnock. Surely you can do better than publish a six-month old photograph without even saying who these brave and extraordinary women are? They are still there. And they are still carrying the can for the whole beleaguered health service.

You could do a lot worse than to visit them on the picket line and use the same column inches as your photograph to tell *their* important story. Neil Kinnock scarcely comes into it. They have been waiting for you since the strike began on 1 October 1984.

Which first, woman or the egg?

Philip Kestelman, London SE13

According to Nell McCafferty (*NS* 13 September), the Irish Republic is the only country 'in the world to hold that the fertilised egg is equal in status to the woman who brings it to human fruition within her womb'.

In a referendum on 7 September 1983, the Irish Constitution was amended by a two-thirds majority of electors (36 per cent to 18 per cent; the remaining 46 per cent did not vote). Article 40, Clause 3, now prescribes: 'The state acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right'.

It is a curious wording: small wonder that half the electors were too bemused to vote; and Irish judges have yet to interpret it. Indeed, it is highly debatable whether 'the unborn' should be regarded as coterminous with the human embryo/fetus, either in law or in morality. In the United Kingdom, the so-called Unborn Children (Protection) Bill raised not altogether dissimilar issues which are likely to be resurrected shortly.

Vassals to Uncle Sam

Anita Penner, Twickenham

For once, Britain can look to Canada as an example of how to survive as a vassal state of the USA. Indeed, we Canadians have had a long and effortless run at total subversion, firstly of our economic system, and ultimately of our cultural identity.

But now the ultimate in union with the USA: you too may know occupation by the US military machine. Canada expelled them forcibly in 1777 and again in 1814, but they are working at worming their way back in. In England, you can look to Churchill and the last World War: Yanks simply never really left this country.

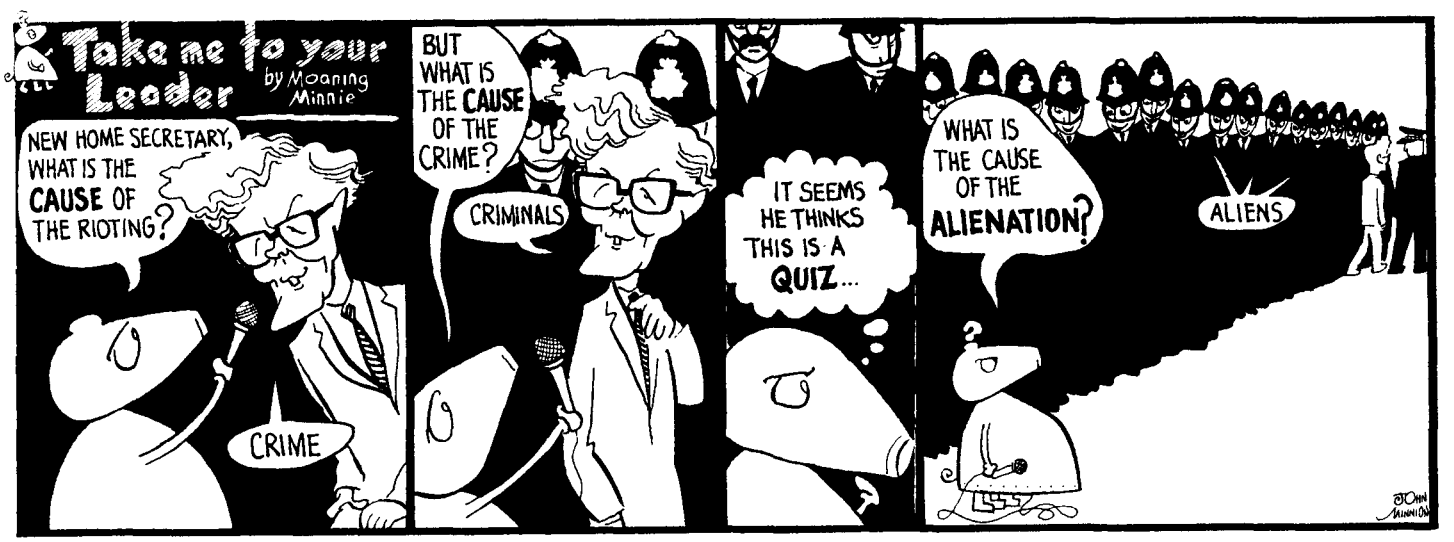
We can teach you how to tug your forelocks just so. For instance, we recently practised this skill when Uncle Sam came calling with his cruise missiles to Alberta. Public anxiety and protest made no difference to what is, in essence, a private government agreement, and the tests went ahead.

There is a difference between us two as US-labelled 'third world' countries: Canada can at least plead geographical proximity. Britain has (had) the Atlantic Ocean to act as a deterrent, and new ideas about a United Europe to look to. Unfortunately, the UK has also had Mrs Thatcher in a permanent state of glowing submissiveness to Mr Reagan, and she has consequently sold this nation up the river, without even the dignity of a paddle.

Bad language

Fiona van Zwanenberg, London NW5

Will someone please tell Claudia Wright (*NS* 13 September) that it is no longer acceptable — if it ever was — to refer to 'retarded and crippled individuals.'


Take me to your Leader
by Moaning Minnie
NEW HOME SECRETARY, WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE RIOTING?
CRIME
BUT WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE CRIME?
CRIMINALS
IT SEEMS HE THINKS THIS IS A QUIZ...
WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE ALIENATION?
ALIENS

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No sob story

Dora Russell, Penzance, Cornwall

Writers aspire to be reviewed and feel that it is not done to quarrel with their reviewers. But Anne Smith's review of my *Tamarisk Tree 3* (*NS* 6 September) is seriously misleading. It suggests to the reader that its theme is my personal feelings and the fortunes of my family, giving a picture of a sob-sister for whom it was 'all very sad'. She suggests that the 'easy way to regard this book would be to take it as a historical record of British society and politics' thus turning the reader away from the very purposes for which the book was written: in order that men, and women especially, should learn about facts of their recent history so far unknown, because largely deliberately concealed from them. 'Say not the struggle naught availeth'. On the contrary it is all relevant, going on and being fought out here and now.

Two laagers

Mamzer Ben-Zona, Montreal, Canada

James Baldwin in his letter to Bishop Tutu flippantly dismisses Israel's relations with South Africa (*NS* 23 August) as does most of the world, but he does a disservice to the public as well as to Israel. Israel has strong economic and military ties to South Africa. Indeed it is widely believed that both co-operated in the detonation of a nuclear device in 1979.

Unlike South Africa, Israel is very sensitive to public opinion — from Diaspora Jews because of their large financial contributions and from the West due, partly, to being dependent on the huge economic and military aid from the US. Since Israel, too, wants to portray itself biblically as a 'light to the Gentiles' (Isaiah 49:6), an epistle to it would be beneficial.

As an Israeli peace activist, currently living abroad, I am disgusted that a country founded on socialist ethics for the dignity of Jews should aid in the oppression of blacks, not to mention its role as a leading supplier of arms to reactionary regimes. The Israeli government tries to defend its intransigence to the Palestinians on the basis of security. But how can it afford, let alone justify, the bond of Zionism and racism in a world where so many equate the ideologies of the two laagers?

Geoff Steuart, Oxford Polytechnic

May I correct a number of errors in M. Sugarman's letter (*NS* 13 September).

An 'autonomous state' leading to ultimate 'independence' was never offered to the Palestinians at Camp David, rather self-government strictly controlled by the interested parties. Only acceptable Palestinians were allowed to enter the negotiations with a ban on the PLO. Carter was more than truthful when he stated in 1979, 'I am against the creation of a separate Palestinian state. I don't think it would be good for the Palestinians. I don't think it would be good for Israel.'

There was complete agreement between Carter, Begin and Sadat on this point; how can Sugarman believe otherwise? As for the UN Resolution of 1948, it is true that the Arab nations did not recognise the division of Palestine but much water has passed under the bridge. This resolution is now part of the negotiating framework of the PLO. It is interesting, however, that the self-same political solution is rejected by both the ANC and UDF in South Africa.

Would Sugarman consider it spurious to compare the 'extremism' of the ANC to the 'moderation' of the PLO?

FEEDBACK

Socialism doesn't sweeten death

NICHOLAS BELL claims (*NS* 6 September) that 'extreme caution is needed before making any direct accusations' as to culpability for the sinking of our vessel the *Rainbow Warrior*. At the same time, however, Mr Bell is not at all reticent in making some sweeping insinuations about who might be to blame, and some rather inaccurate observations and assumptions about Greenpeace.

Since Greenpeace did not exist before 1972, and Greenpeace Paris was not founded until 1976, I would be grateful if Mr Bell would enlighten me as to what 'original ex-1968 Greenpeace activists' have been forcibly ejected by 'dubious elements close to the right', and would further ask why, if this is the case, the current director of that office is one of its founders. As to the office's political leanings, Greenpeace had hoped that Mitterrand's socialist government would make good on its pre-election promise to end nuclear weapons testing. That it has not would be no reason to shift support to the right. Their policy on that issue is no better. We are not an organisation involved in electoral politics. Our issues are strictly environmental ones.

What seems especially hard for our critics to understand is that we refuse to compromise a hard line by holding ourselves accountable to any political party or elected official. Our money comes from nearly a million people worldwide and our membership cuts across the political spectrum. We do not involve ourselves in the electoral politics of those nations in which we work, nor do we believe that the left-right political dimension of the issues with which we are involved tells the whole story. Mr Mitterrand is a socialist who poisons the environment of the South Pacific with radiation from nuclear tests. Brian Mulroney of Canada stands on the right, yet his government has a policy of reducing Canadian acid rain emissions by 50 per cent.

Secondly, it is precisely the narrowness of vision which demands that all issues be forced to fit a formula of left or right, pro- or anti- government, which has cast the Greenpeace affair as 'an Anglo-Saxon plot against France', to use Chris Price's telling phrase (*NS* 6 September). If we cannot escape being accused of attacking an entire government (or even a nation) because of our objection to one of its policies, then so be it. We are certainly not going to agree to give up criticising French nuclear testing in the Pacific in order to protect Mr Mitterrand. Our campaign is not against France, or the French, or the Mitterrand government. Our campaign is against the detonation of nuclear weapons, whether they are in Nevada or Siberia or beneath a fragile coral atoll, and we oppose the practice no matter who is doing it.

As to the 'vast publicity coup' which Greenpeace has supposedly gained, I for one would trade every headline and cover to bring back the *Rainbow Warrior* and the crewmember who died when she sank. We lost a ship that had many years of work ahead of her. We lost the countless hours of volunteer labour that went into making her the flagship of our organisation. We lost a devoted and professional photographer. And one of the finest crews with which we have ever put to sea was split up. I challenge you to find anyone in our organisation whose heart did not go down with the *Rainbow Warrior* or who would not change the course of events in Auckland Harbour if it was within their power.

We make no secret of the fact that we use publicity, that in this age of instant communication and television the media is a powerful force for bringing the world's consciousness to bear on the problems that face our planet. The publicity surrounding the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior* is a positive force for us only insofar as it shows once again the futility of violence as a political solution, and to the extent that it has focussed worldwide opposition to French nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific. We expect, however, that the momentary increase in attention to this issue is minor compared to what the *Rainbow Warrior* could have done had she completed her mission of opposition to nuclear testing and aid to the victims of radioactive fallout. It is for that reason that we are convinced that whoever did sink our ship did so to silence our opposition to nuclear weapons testing in the South Pacific.

Mr Bell ignores entirely the moral dimension of this issue. If it is proven that the French government was responsible for the sinking, the entire affair raises a question which applies equally to the sabotage of our ship and to the testing of the nuclear weapons which she opposed: by what right does a government take the lives of its own citizens, or those of any other nation, into its own hands to do away with as it sees fit in the name of nuclear deterrence?

This is not an issue of Left and Right. It's a question of right and wrong.

David McTaggart

David McTaggart is chair of Greenpeace International

Women fly, naturally

Kate Oliver, London N16

I admire the *NS* greatly; hence the jolt and the anger when I read, on 23 August, David Learmount saying: 'But the best insurance is simply that, despite the average human's suspicion that man (sic) was not really meant to fly, there is really no choice.'

No wonder insurance companies can charge women more for a policy if even the *NS* does not consider women equal or visible.

Impounded passport

K Sabir, London N4

The report about my case by Mr Anwar Iqbal (*NS* 6 September) was excellent.

However, I wish to rectify two small things which otherwise may create misunderstanding: first, that I was candidate for the National Assembly (Lok Sabha) and not the Provincial Assembly; and second, that I withdrew from the electioneering of my own accord.

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Clifford Harper

TORTURE'S DEAD SIMPLICITY

Today we think of torture as a sign of the darkest places in human history and the human soul. MICHAEL IGNATIEFF traces its justification from the Greek view of slaves to today's response to terrorism

The man is being tortured. All around him is only the cold hard wood of the rack. But the hands of the executioner and his assistant are warm and human. And the man on the rack rubs his cheek against those warm hands which hold him to inflict the torture.

That is my nightmare.

Victor Shklovsky
A Sentimental Journey, Memoirs, 1917-1922

IT IS THE most intimate of all relations between strangers: eye to eye, hand to hand, breath on breath, torturer and victim are as close as lovers. How then is it possible?

Torturers' motives would only be a moral puzzle if we supposed humans to possess a natural empathy for the suffering of others. But why should we assume any such thing? We have little natural empathy for each other in the abstract: we value our differences as individuals more than our similarities as a species: the common fate of the body is more a matter of shame than of pride. Each fault line of difference — race, religion, class and gender, can be widened by the lies and fantasies of propaganda into an abyss across which screams cease to signify. Torturers need not be monsters to be deaf to these screams.

No one actually feels the pain of another. We live in certainty about our own pain, in doubt about the reality of another's. There is nothing natural about empathy: it is a rope bridge of language suspended across the abyss which separates us from the skins of others. Cut the bridge of language, and men will stare out across the abyss at each other, as if they were gazing on racks of meat.

There is never any shortage of recruits for the torture squads: it is a dirty job, but the pay is good and there is security. Torture does not need to call upon the sadist's exaltation, merely the humble human capacity for splitting in two — of not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing.

The torturer's role comes complete with the anaesthetising slang of a sub-profession — the Argentinian torturers call what they do 'the dance'; in the Philippines it is called the birthday party, in Greece the tea party. These are the jokes which strip the thing itself of incriminating significance. The victims' suffering also conspires to assist the torturer: the more inhuman the screaming, the more bestial the torment, the less human — the less incriminating — the victim can seem. Torture makes torturers: the role and the act disconnect the meanings which might otherwise implicate torturers in the fate of their victims.

Torture works, torture pleases, torture exploits our natural incapacity to feel the pain of others. There ought to be no mystery about torture's role in propping up more than half the States of the globe. Scarcely more than a handful of modern States repose on the consent of the governed: the rest rely on the water cannon, the bayonet, and the interrogation cell. Dictators have found torture an efficient substitute for the unpredictable rituals of consent, while democracies have turned to torture — the French in Algeria, the British in Northern Ireland, the Israelis on the West Bank — when consent has crumbled. Torture is power's answer to the collapse of legitimacy.

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THE RIGHT question to ask about torture, therefore, is not why it exists, not why human beings become torturers, but why so normal an instrument of power has become a scandal.

What *has* changed is the moral visibility of torture. We think of it now as a sign pointing to the darkest places in human nature, a symptom of a century's guilt about its own history. Thanks to the UN Declaration of Human Rights and Amnesty, the cantonment of responsibilities at the borders of one's nation, one's race, class or religion has broken down. The moral internationalism built on the shame at the Gentile pharasaism which attended the destruction of European Jewry now insists that what happens in the jails of Kampala, Johannesburg and Moscow is as much our business as what happens in Wormwood Scrubs.

This marks a new moment in the history of conscience. Torture was not a moral puzzle for the ancient world. Greek and Roman law distinguished between the testimony of men of honour, whose word was their bond, and slaves and *humiliores* — men of base social standing — who could not be trusted to tell the truth unless submitted to the queen of torments.

Likewise, in the middle ages, a good Catholic inquisitioner would have been scandalised by the common sense of late 20th century liberal humanism — that there is no sin greater than deliberate cruelty inflicted on another human being. Such a scruple was blasphemous: it valued human life higher than obedience to God's will, and to the inquisitioner God's will was clear. Was it not written: compel them to enter? And what compulsion is more persuasive than pain? Torture chambers are intensely moral places: torturers have to find some value higher than human life in the name of which they allow themselves to exercise their particular talents.

Systems of torture also imply a tacit anthropology. The inquisition divided the human race into believers and heretics, an anthropology of amnesia towards the Gospel message of the equality of all human creatures. The early State courts divided the world into honourable persons whose word could be believed, and hardened criminals who could only be counted on to tell the truth under extreme duress. In these courts of the post-medieval State, torture was held to be the only sure way of eliciting the queen of proofs, the personal confession required for conviction in all capital cases. If torture did not spread north into Scandinavia and Britain, it was because northern Europe held onto the older adversarial system in which conflicting claims of prosecution and defence were assessed by a jury. In the adversarial system, confession was not required for conviction in capital cases. Looser evidential standards dispensed with the need for the queen of torments. She made her entry into British jurisprudence only in treason cases where forced confessions could be used to smash treasonable conspiracies against the monarch.

Clifford Harper

'The right question to ask about torture, therefore, is not why it exists, nor why human beings become torturers, but why so normal an instrument of power has become a scandal.'

THE MORAL OUTCRY against torture in the Enlightenment simply re-echoed voices already raised against the practice for two centuries. The decisive change was in procedure: the continental system ceased to depend on the queen of proofs — confession — and hence decreased its resort to the queen of torments. The rise of imprisonment as an alternative to execution enabled judges to convict on lesser charges in cases where proof was not certain, instead of relying on torture to secure confession.

Gibbeting, public flogging, execution, and torture all came to share the mysterious opprobrium of progress. They came to be seen as barbarous vestiges of an age when the State had just seized the monopoly of judicial violence from the private army and the blood feud. Popular dislike of the torturer and the executioner in the early modern period was not directed at their cruelty, but at their mercenary office: they inflicted cruelty for money on the State's behalf. Only as the State's monopoly on the use of legitimate violence came to be accepted, did the contempt for the mercenary character of the office decline; but as it did opprobrium shifted to the cruelty of the ritual.

The gross physicality of early modern torture and execution, must be understood — Michael Foucault argued — as symbolic embodiment of an angry sovereign's chastisement of his disobedient subjects. The same figures — Grotius, Pufendorf, Locke, Montaigne — who raised the first protests against torture, were at the same time re-thinking State power not as the personalised embodiment of the sovereign's will but as a public trust, anchored in social consent, rather than in fear and awe at the violence of the Father.

The new European State raised on these philosophical foundations developed new symbols of power: the modern police and prison services. This new technology of power dispensed with the need for torture throughout the 19th century. The greatest concentration of undemocratic police power ever seen in 20th century Western Europe — Fouche's Napoleonic police — was not underpinned by torture. Torture survived, as Malise Ruthven has shown, only in the weak, archaic Neapolitan and papal States of mid century Italy.

At the same time as torture lost its place in the new armoury of State power, the old anthropology which justified the infliction of torture on the unfree, the infamous and the humble began to break down. Torture became a scandal at the same time as slavery, the neglect of prisoners and the legal inequality of women and blacks became social facts which the rich and powerful had to understand as an indictment of themselves, rather than as some distant disturbance in another moral galaxy.

THIS NEW CONSCIOUSNESS — this identification with those in pain — was

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quite consistent with the redoubling of social distance between rich and poor. Indeed, it was not in spite of, but because of their admission of their essential identity with the poor that the European bourgeoisie set about devising ingenious new barriers of social exclusion. Class was an invention which reconciled the privileges and pleasures of status exclusion with the truth of moral and legal equality — which is one reason why the chasm of class did not serve, as the chasm of race often did on the peripheries of empire, to legitimize the use of torture.

The new mental universe, which accepted the juridical equality of all human subjects, was sustained in turn by a moral cosmopolitanism, built on the ideology of free trade, the march of the mind and the universal spread of progress and civilization. Gladstone's campaign against Neapolitan torture was only one crusade in a career of Christian moral internationalism which took up the cause of the Armenians and Bulgarians suffering under the Turkish yoke. The abolition of torture in the peripheries of the empire marched in the van of this now vanished bourgeois internationalism.

Inspired by this internationalist spirit Victor Hugo proclaimed the end of torture in 1874 — just as it made its reappearance. Torture was a humble camp follower in the Great Powers' gadarene rush towards the abyss of the First World War. The old liberal cosmopolitanism evaporated in the heat of imperial competition; borders which were once opened came to require passports; the State secret returned, and with it the State police — the Okhrana, the Deuxième Bureau, Scotland Yard; the State police built a new labyrinth of prisons and in these recesses the torture cell re-emerged, at first for spies, then for terrorists.

Imperial rivalry in the decades before the First War nourished and exploited conspiracy, the secret and the spy. The modern State engendered a new paranoia towards the 'enemy without', that fantasy of encirclement and vulnerability, which legitimised its ever more frantic acquisition of police powers.

The totalitarian States of the 20th century built their torture apparatus on the archipelago of institutions of surveillance and control bequeathed them by the imperial States of the 19th. The Cheka inherited the Okhrana's cells, whips and files. The unsated land hungers and ethnic hatreds left over from 19th century imperial quarrels were taken up and legitimated anew by Communism and Nazism, and the new regimes which rode to power on revolution in turn engendered a new anthropology of the class enemy, the Jew, the gypsy and the kulak — who could be tortured and exterminated for the sake, once again, of some value higher than humble human life.

FROM THIS HISTORY, most of us like to think we have awakened as from a nightmare. Yet it is a kind of condescension to consign torture to a now vanished age of religious superstition, to believe that it has no place — except in the hearts of a few sadists — in a tolerant liberal culture. Liberal cultures can be blind to their own fashions in fanaticism.

'Terrorism has become the most potent — and the most dangerous — of all modern justifications for torture . . . Terrorism's tactic is to provoke torture, to force democratic societies to descend to the same calculus as the terrorists.'

Consider feeling in America during the Beirut hi-jacking and hostage drama. Terrorism has become the most potent — and the most dangerous — of all modern justifications for torture. It requires little imagination to suppose what would have happened if some Shi-ite gunman possessed of information about the hostages' whereabouts had fallen into the hands of a CIA operative in Beirut. The line between legitimate coercion of a suspect and torture is razor thin, and never more easily crossed than when the suspect holds alien and unpleasant beliefs, and vengeance has such evident political rewards.

If torture works, and terrorism provides moral justification on the cheap, what kind of argument can possibly prevail against its use in a case like the Beirut hi-jacking? The argument that torture violates a natural human inviolability is unlikely to cut much ice with anti-terrorist squads, especially when the terrorists' own view about human inviolability was made manifest by dumping the young Marine's body onto the tarmac of Beirut airport.

Yet anti-terrorist squads ought to attend to the fact that torture is likely to have little purchase on anyone who believes his pain is the price of a martyr's immortality. Even when torture works on humbler victims it silences the flow of information which would be available to the authorities if they could count on the support of their people. A regime which depends on torture for its information comes to depend on it exclusively. In Algeria, once the police and army began to stink with the infamy of torture, it became ever more infamous for Arabs to associate with the French. If more Israeli officers succumb to their feelings in dealing with Palestinian terrorists, the West Bank will become ungovernable.

Torture works, but only in the short-term. In the regimes where torture has been the mainstay of the regime — Argentina, Greece, Turkey, Chile — terrorism provided the covering permission. Where terrorism did not exist, it was invented. Yet these regimes were like card houses poised on a torturer's needle: one by one they fell apart. It is not fanciful to suppose that even General Pinochet's days are numbered.

IN ARGENTINA, when the death squads in the Ford Falcons were making their dawn raids, the boys and girls on the beach used to say to reporters 'there is no politics in Argentina.' If torture ends politics, so does terrorism. Their object is the same: to strike against the trust between strangers which sustains the public realm, the political world. In the long-term, even non-democratic societies cannot function without politics, without some uncoerced debate and circulation of information. Torture clots and blocks the very flow of information it seeks and destroys the civil society on which political stability reposes.

Torture also plays into the hands of terror. Terrorism's tactic is to provoke torture, to force democratic societies to descend to the same calculus as the terrorists. The Red Brigades and Baader Meinhof are gone, but the anti-terrorist apparatuses of Europe they left behind are their ironic memorial. The IRA's finest achievement is the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The Palestinians who bomb Israeli civilian buses know that their real targets are the civil liberties' traditions of the Israeli army, police and courts. Terrorism takes aim at liberal society's chief source of pride: its often self-wounding restraint.

Terrorism is a language which calls to its brother — torture — to speak; when its brother replies, this dialogue is the death of politics. The test of a people's determination to defend their politics is not the license they give to their anti-terrorist squads, but in their capacity to resist the seduction of their own indignation for the sake of their own liberty. □

Michael Ignatieff is the author of several works on history. His last book was Needs of Strangers, *published by Chatto and Windus in 1984.*

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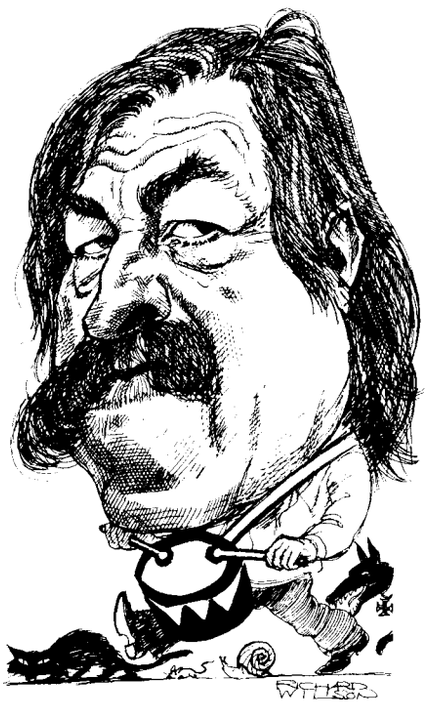
And when they ask us

Jon Cook

On Writing and Politics 1967-1983
GÜNTER GRASS *Secker* £12



FLATTERY has customarily connected writing to politics. Rulers of all sorts hired poets to lay the praise on thick. Perhaps they believed the poets' own propaganda, that poetry conferred immortality on its subject. Power loves to think itself endless and there have always been writers willing to tend the thought. At the very least, when the tyrant woke shrieking in the night from some guilty nightmare, he could turn to the latest eulogy by his hireling poet for reassurance.

Shakespeare turned the conventions of flattery to a searching critical purpose: his sonnets reveal the brutal narcissism of his aristocratic patron while appearing to offer respectful advice. At the beginning of the 19th century, Shelley turned the eulogy inside out: instead of guaranteeing immortality, art could reveal the fragility of tyrannical power. Shelley could not have written like this without the emergent belief that imaginative literature could bear witness to a truth beyond the conceptions of established political and religious power.

The romantic side of Günter Grass seems to believe something like this too, but he also respects the facts of history. Gottfried Benn's advocacy of racism in Nazi Germany, Marinetti's crush on Mussolini, Pound's affair with Fascism, Brecht's hymns to Stalin: the list could be extended indefinitely. Writers are just like the rest of us, easily seduced. Heads filled with the great vision, high on rhetoric, political terror becomes no more than a means to an end, the realisation of a society which will have the beauty and organisation of an artwork.

For Grass, the facts of history are not something which once happened but have ceased to matter. They surface in the everyday world of family life, in the questions that his children ask him about what the Germans did to the Jews during the Second World War. Grass's answer was to write *From the Diary of a Snail* and one of the essays in this collection, 'What Shall We Tell Our Children?', describes how that book came to be written. The essay reveals that Grass's subjects choose him as much as he chooses them. His children's questions provoke a chain reaction. Seemingly disparate circumstances connect together like stars in a constellation. An unfinished story by Heine about the fate of the Jews in Germany; Grass's own memories of his childhood in Danzig and the enigma of his ignorance about the fate of the Jewish community which was almost literally round the corner; the 1969 elections to the German Parliament in which the beneficiaries of Nazi crime were still active: these are inescapably political circumstances and for a writer like Grass they are the demands and questions which provoke him to new ways of telling stories.

Writing and politics are therefore inextricably connected. Everyday life is saturated with political reality. In recollecting his own Danzig childhood Grass recognises how family intimacies and personal friendships were all shaped by the unfolding of Fascism. Writers can choose to evade these facts or confront them. Evasion means contributing to a collective amnesia which allows people to pretend that they haven't done what they've done. Grass sees the contemporary state of Germany as a compound of denials. Against these denials what he discovers is that the leaders of both the Catholic and Protestant Churches did know and, almost without exception, they refused to tell. The responsibility of the writer is not to forget. At one level this means dredging up the facts that have been deliberately discarded. But it also means lodging these facts in a narrative which will not itself become an evasion or denial, a way of remembering which is in reality a means of forgetting.

English readers may be tempted to see the concerns of these essays in terms of a position which is not their own. Grass is, after all, a German writer caught up in the particular anguish of his nation's recent history. Fortunately, we are allowed no such comfort. The future weighs heavily on Grass's writing and the future which preoccupies him is not local or national but global. In one essay, 'Racing with Utopias', he juxtaposes the futuristic fantasies of Alfred Döblin with his own record of a journey through Japan, Thailand and Indonesia. Döblin's fantasies begin to coincide with contemporary fact. Governments conspire in mad acts of environmental destruction in the name of scientific progress. The Fascist reality continues, although by another name, as the many live terrorised lives so that the few can continue to profit. Grass calls this form of power 'oligarchical collectivism', but his vision will be familiar to anyone who has read Orwell or followed recent debates on the Left about authoritarian populism. 'Oligarchical collectivism' is the typical form of government in the late 20th century. It is easily reconciled with the pretence of democracy. Everything is done in the name of the popular will, but in reality crucial areas of decision-making are withheld from the difficult, democratic process of negotiating consent. As a result the process of terror continues.

In this situation, writers work in an increasingly narrow margin. For the first time the simple existence of a future is no longer secure. The traditional certainty that a writer's work might be received by posterity has gone. But Grass does not simply acquiesce in this gloomy reality. Against it he offers the arts of peace which we find so difficult to learn. He contributes to these arts by the tone of his own writing: witty, sardonic, refusing to be overtaken by the pace of events. And if his own writing is the record of great terror, there is firmly lodged within it another history of acts of human solidarity and courage which keep a vestige of hope alive. Grass does not flatter us but he doesn't lecture us either. His inventiveness continues to represent an insubordinate democratic impulse which is not simply of his own making. □

Talking of writing

Harriett Gilbert

Novelists in Interview
JOHN HAFFENDEN *Methuen* £11.95 & £5.95

HAFFENDEN'S BOOK is like the best Christmas puddings: rich; dense; studded with treasures; and tending, if swallowed too much at a time, to provoke acute indigestion.

That last isn't meant as a dismissal. On the contrary, the collection is important to anyone with the slightest interest in contemporary

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British fiction. Its very density is partly a function of the wealth of comment, information and polemic that Haffenden nudges from Martin Amis, Malcolm Bradbury, Anita Brookner, Angela Carter, William Golding, Russell Hoban, David Lodge, Ian McEwan, Iris Murdoch, V.S. Pritchett, Salman Rushdie, David Storey, Emma Tennant and Fay Weldon — if not an exhaustive list of our most original establishment novelists (or even a list without problematic inclusions), at least one where regular fiction-readers must surely find *someone* they respect.

And baking powder isn't altogether absent. Angela Carter on Fevvers, the heroine of *Nights at the Circus*, describes her as 'basically Mae West with wings', then adds — *à propos* of nothing apparent — 'Mae West's walk is one of the most extraordinary things about her — as though she is saddle-sore, which makes the mind reel if you think of it in that way: what *has* she been up to?!'

Stodginess, however, does prevail — with the academics particularly prone to disproportionate solemnity, but everyone more-or-less edited down to a concentrated, whimsy-less essence. A *little* bit of: 'Tea or coffee, John? Am I rambling too much? Do you mind if I smoke?' should perhaps have been left in the transcripts.

It doesn't help the digestion, either, that footnote pieces of information have been crammed into the body of the text, so that Russell Hoban is forced to pronounce, 'At some point the words from the *Heart Sutra*, "Here, O Sariputra, form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form; emptiness does not differ from form, form does not differ from emptiness" (trans. Edward Conze, London: Allen & Unwin) became very strong and active for me...' Nor that the interviews have been arranged according to the subjects' surnames, preventing the fluent development of themes that arrangement with reference to the interviews' content would have been more likely to promote.

The obvious solution to all of these problems would be for the reader not even to attempt to read the collection holistically but to treat the interviews as separate items, ignoring altogether those authors in whom she or he has no interest already. This wouldn't be inappropriate. Haffenden conducted the interviews at various times between 1980 and late 1984 (a number of them for the *Literary Review*) and, one imagines, originally conceived them as separate explorations of the novelists' work.

It would be a terrible pity, though, if that were the only way they were read. Taking them cumulatively (and if you chew very slowly) you will begin to acquire a picture of what's now alive, kicking and exciting in the novel — a three-dimensional representation of the academics' critical theories.

On one level, this sense of excitement comes from the authors' communal delight (despite the fact that many of them pretend that they'd rather have been painters) in their craft for their craft's own sake. McEwan, for instance, says of 'First Love, Last Rites', 'I also had a simple-silly desire to end a story with the word "Yes". I was dazzled by the end of *Ulysses*. My problem was how to get to the "Yes". The problem almost preceded the content.' And, 'My chief aim,' says Emma Tennant of *Queen of Stones*, 'was to make the novel rather like a high-tech modern building, where all the plumbing is purposefully shown on the outside.'

This pleasure in formal games-playing presses against the solemnity; while, more widely, the authors convey the excitement of a novel's taking shape as it procedes, of the ways in which story, characters and so on acquire, once conceived, an independent life. The perverted English of Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker*, for example, wasn't part of the original intention, 'but as I worked it obstinately insisted on moving out of straight English into a corrupted English. Now that I think of it, I don't see how it could have been conceived otherwise. . .The language of the debased and degraded future that Riddley lives in is bound to be full of uncomprehended remnants of what we have today. . . .'

Nor was Rushdie's *Shame* designed to end the way that it does, but with Raza 'in exile in Gloucester Road, as many fallen figures might — not to die in that appalling way but to be living in a Kensington flat, with no pictures on the walls, stick furniture from Pontings, curtains that are never opened, lots of lights and heaters on all the time. I felt quite anxious to get him out of the country and into England. . . but it then became clear to me that the characters were refusing to leave the country. . .'

This 'independent' existence of their texts is not connected to 'inspiration' or a 'Muse', but is linked by the authors to their shared belief in the value of process, as distinct from product, and their joint inability/refusal to make with their novels an absolute statement. This is not, it can't be emphasised enough, because of lack of moral convictions or social or political awareness: feminism, nuclear warfare, racism, class, international power politics are among the issues with which they are variously engaged in their lives and their work. But there seems to be a general acceptance of T.S. Eliot's opinion (quoted in the book's introduction) that 'The poem's existence is somewhere between the writer and the reader' — a retreat, in other words, from authorial omnipotence and certainty. Even allegory and fable are corrupted, their clarities deliberately confused; while comedy, with its inbuilt subversiveness and undermining of assumptions, is generally accepted as the only appropriate contemporary novelistic form.

I suppose it's only in England that novelists talking about their work with a sense of commitment, direction and awareness of what one another is doing could seem remotely original, but this is England, and it does. □

One eyelid batting

Bill Greenwell

Jackdaw Cake
NORMAN LEWIS *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95

SINCE NORMAN LEWIS is a real dab hand at deflecting limelight, the prospect of his autobiography is itself exciting. Forward, Mr Lewis! Let's meet the man behind the lens!

And it does indeed transpire that Lewis at one time worked as a wedding photographer. But as for further revelation, no such luck. We must make do with yet another confident, witty, brilliant and self-effacing piece of writing from this most effortless stylist. By the conclusion of *Jackdaw Cake*, quietly subtitled 'an autobiography', that indefinite article has acquired special stress and Lewis has ghosted away. His modesty is, as ever, sublime. The puff accompanying Penguin editions of his novels, for instance, used to describe his 'recreation' as 'amateur anthropology'. This is a singular understatement about the writer who, in *A Dragon Apparent* (1951), incidentally revealed not only an acute grasp of the complex cultural history of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, but also more than a passing acquaintance with the economic, political, botanical, even architectural aspects of the lands through which he travelled.

This sortie into his family history introduces us firstly to three aunts and a grandfather, living in Carmarthen, the eccentricities of each of whom border on the far shores of sanity. They are like something out of a mischievous novel by James Hanley. To these relative crackpots Lewis was sent, aged nine, apparently to heal a family breach: his father, having had artistic pretensions, had been outlawed to England. The grandson was to make good his father's failings by letting the grandfather mould him into a model Welshman. Such attempts, abetted by the local school, were useless. They had the effect, confesses Lewis, of 'practically silencing me in the presence of adults.' This first exercise in learning to keep things to himself is soon followed by another.

As he returns to Enfield, and his parents' home, it transpires that his father, the local chemist, has become a practising Spiritualist medium. Indeed, the spirits have him at their beck and call. The young Norman Lewis merely perpetuates the 'personal camouflage' learned in Carmarthen. This invisibility sees him safely through his adolescence and through

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encounters with his first in-laws, expatriate Sicilians of Spanish descent. And so: his grandfather 'sometimes conversed in a loud and familiar voice [with God] largely on financial matters', and breeds game cocks; his aunt has parboiled the eggs to cull, surreptitiously, the fowl population; his parents believe in ectoplasm and the laying on of hands; and now his father-in-law, lighting his house with high-powered lamps, spends his hours decorating walls and ceilings in the style of Michelangelo. Of Norman Lewis, there is little to be seen. There is barely heard the distant batting of an eyelid.

Lewis is uniquely both dispassionate and compassionate. It is plain that he regards the family absurdities not only with affection but also as harmless. The same is not the case when, almost as if qualified to cope with outbreaks of dementia, he is drafted into military intelligence in the Second World War and sent to North Africa. Now the madness is more menacing. His job is principally to deal with informants, the majority of whom are merely settling scores. His senior officers, although treated by Lewis with his familiar, benign irony, are mentally unbalanced; his section includes some genial alcoholics. But the absurdities of war, manifested most peculiarly in its bureaucracies and petty habits, are treated with withering scorn.

At this stage in *Jackdaw Cake*, Lewis turns to his diaries and lets them speak for the period up to that recounted in *Naples '44* (which is sensibly left to fill in its own gap). This leaves us with only 11 further pages to sketch in the intervening 40 years. Fifteen lines take us from 1952 through 1968. The divorce from his first wife — inevitable, as his narrative indicates — took place in 1946. We pry no further — there is no reason why we should — into the domestic life of Norman Lewis.

Only writers of Lewis's calibre could get away with such an odd book, moving as it does from hindsight to selective transcript and on to a quick epilogue. An extract printed in *Granta 14* had primed me for its expert timing and its quiet uproar of reminiscence. I wish only that Lewis had been less reticent about his writing. His 12 novels rate about two sentences. How he sets about editing his notebooks receives no attention whatsoever. Admirable though it may be to leave his tremendous travel writing to stand for itself, I'd still have welcomed some further reflections. His stints of journalism, some of it justly celebrated, are practically shrugged off as ways of paying the air-fares, supporting his habit of travelling. Typically, this is called 'self-indulgence'. On one issue, he is notably foxy. In how many languages can he get by? When he meets his father-in-law, who speaks no English, Lewis admits to nothing more than a smattering of bad Welsh. Two pages later, the pair of them are apparently in drunken, animated conversation about eating cat stew as a point of Sicilian honour. It seems that Lewis's camouflage is still very much in action.

It is certainly news that Lewis made his first real living on the fringe of the second-hand market, flogging everything from umbrellas to pickled anatomical specimens; and that his aunts went through a protracted weekly ritual of baking cake for local jackdaws. This, however, is the small change of the book. The profit to be earned from this 'autobiography' is in its anecdotal glee. I look forward to another autobiography with equal pleasure. Indeed, I look forward to another sentence, if it is by Norman Lewis. □

POETRY

Gruesomely gooey

John Lucas

A Happy Childhood
WILLIAM MATTHEWS *Secker* £5.95
Ukelele Music
PETER READING *Secker* £3.95
From the Irish
JAMES SIMMONS *Blackstaff Press* £3.95
A Voyage Round the Moon
JOHN GOHORRY *Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets* £4.50

WILLIAM MATTHEWS is an American poet whose **A Happy Childhood** comes festooned with praise from his fellow countrymen. I can see why. His poems contribute to that very self-conscious American tradition of the child as holy innocent, its lost world achingly recovered, but only in memory, by the adult writer for ever excluded from the paradise such a world embodies. This is the tradition to which *Huckleberry Finn* is presumed to belong, the tradition of Hemingway's 'Big Two-Hearted River', of the *Catcher in the Rye*; and of much else besides. It is, in other words, regressive, sentimental and, for all the verbal skills Matthews brings to his poems, deeply debilitating. In the volume's title poem, he says: 'It turns out you are the story of your childhood/and you're under constant revision,/like a lonely folktale whose invisible folks//are all the selves you've been, lifelong . . .' Even Holden Caulfield would have seen how phoney this is. Why, after all, does it have to be a 'lonely' folktale? The answer must be that this particular word sets up a throb of pathos which is reminiscent of Randall Jarrell at his worst and of that so-common line in American writing where the man is father of the dream child. In another poem, Matthews recalls a past where 'Mother/called us in for dinner, which, then, as now,//turns out to be leftover loss in sauce.' It's the kind of poem for which the word 'cloying' was invented.

There are also a number of poems which go beyond the gooey to the gruesome, and of these the most betraying — and deserving of anger — is 'Civilisation and Its Discontents'. Is nothing sacred? Not Freud, certainly, nor Frost, whose 'Stopping by Woods in a Snowy Evening' is the source from which Matthews parasitically feeds. 'How much of the great poetry/of solitude in the woods is one/long cadenza on the sadness//of civilisation' it begins, and contrasts such solitude with the world of 'a family [which] scuffs its chairs close//to an inherited table.' The poem ends with the 'great sad soul in the woods' forced to recognise that he must live in the human world quite as much as in the snowy woods. This is, of course, what Frost recognised. Matthews would no doubt agree and I suppose at this point his many champions might start talking of his knowingness. But the fact is that his way of being knowing is meant to provide a protection against criticism. That it can't do this is evident as soon as you realise just how routine, and vacuous, his terms of opposition are: on the one hand the 'great sad soul in the woods', of whom we know nothing apart from its derivation from Frost; on the other, the family, of whom we know nothing at all. *This* is civilisation? Terribly symbolic, I grant; but about as lively as a box of used matches.

In contrast to Matthews's dead literariness, Peter Reading's and James Simmons's new volumes reek of the actual. **Ukelele Music** is about making music while the ship goes down.

The book that has shocked America
now available in the UK
THE
BUTTON
The Nuclear Trigger — Does it work?
DANIEL FORD
'combines the moral urgency of Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* with the nuts-and-bolts policy debate.' Newsday
272 pages Hardback £12.95
ALLEN & UNWIN

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Reading's last volume, *C*, concentrated on one man's death from cancer. The new volume is about the imminent death of the world. 'I didn't invent death,' Philip Larkin is supposed to have remarked, in answer to a question as to why so many of his poems dealt with the subject. *Ukelele Music* doesn't invent many of the horrors that Reading collects from newspapers, TV stories, radio reports:

> *Sexual outrage on woman of 88 robbed of her savings. Finger found stuck on barbed wire.* Too black and over the top.
>
> Clearly we no longer hold *H. Sapiens* in great reverence
> (which situation, alas, no elegaics can fix).
>
> What do they think they're playing at, then, these Poetry Wallahs?
> Grub Street reviewing its own tame valedictory bunk.

The problem with this is not that it's too black but that it comes too easily. In the sense that Auden meant when he said that poetry makes nothing happen, elegaics never *can* fix the horrors of the world. In another, a poet whose blend of satire and outrage looks back to — say — the tradition that produced Juvenal needs to convince us that he's doing more than playing self-reflexive games, or requiring our assent simply because he parades himself as the person ready to confront terrible realities from which more timid souls shrink. *Ukelele Music* seems to me badly compromised both by this posturing and by the invented charwoman whose semi-literate letters punctuate and are meant in some sense to counter the poem's catalogue of disasters. She is as sentimental and reductive a presence as Orwell's Proles, to whom she bears a close family resemblance. Reading is a clever, properly shocking writer (*Diplopic* and *C* contain his best work), but he runs the risk of becoming holier-than-thou.

Many of the poems in James Simmons's **From the Irish** have to do with the particular horrors of Ireland. In 'The Busker' he remarks:

> Yeats didn't invent
> The sentence, 'A terrible beauty is born.'
> He took dictation. And clever hearts
> were moved to invent new ways, that are still
> with us, by which small nations
> can make their mark on the global mess.
>
> Whatever Pearse summoned is hard
> to name and hard to kill.
>
> I hope my son is content with less.

These lines are characteristic of Simmons, both in their strengths — of intelligence, historical understanding, imaginative decency; and in their weaknesses — the fairly desperate jockeying of lines towards rhyme endings ('still/with us' — there's no drama about that run-on), and journalistic clichés ('Make their mark on the global mess'). Yet as with all Simmons's volumes, this one possesses enough verve and generous wit to combat its roughness.

A welcome for John Gohorry's entertainingly various **Voyage Round the Moon**. There are a number of good satires here, especially 'Anaglypta and Corydon', and some sharp and/or warmly observed scenes from domestic life ('New Born', 'Coming Home') and the life around ('A Phrenologist's Head', 'Under the Aqueduct'). It is a pleasure to read such well-made poems. □

Naught for your comfort

Anne Smith

A Maggot
JOHN FOWLES *Cape* £9.95
Blood Libels
CLIVE SINCLAIR *Allison & Busby* £8.95
Bunter Sahib
DANIEL GREEN *Hodder* £8.95
Lucia in Wartime
TOM HOLT *Macmillan* £8.95
But for Bunter
DAVID HUGHES *Heinemann* £8.95
The Conversations of Cow
SUNITI NAMJOSHI *The Women's Press* £7.95 & £2.95
Annie John
JAMAICA KINCAID *Picador* £2.95

JOHN FOWLES has the courage to try to illuminate the darkest, perhaps atavistic and certainly most cunningly hidden recesses of the human psyche: he never, therefore, fails to fascinate. The origin of **A Maggot** is explained in the Prologue thus:

> A maggot is the larval stage of a winged creature; as is the written text, at least in the writer's hope. But an older though now obsolete sense of the word is that of whim or quirk. By extension it was sometimes used in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century of dance-tunes and airs that otherwise had no special title . . . This fictional maggot was written very much for the same reason as those old musical ones . . . out of obsession with a theme. For some years before its writing a small group of travellers, faceless, without apparent motive, went in my mind toward an event. Evidently in some past, since they rode horses, and in a deserted landscape; but beyond this very primitive image, nothing. I do not know where it came from, or why it kept obstinately rising from my unconscious.

Eventually this image was linked with a pencil and watercolour drawing of a young woman, Italian, dated 16 June 1683. What attracted Fowles to this drawing was 'something in the long dead girl's face, in her eyes, an inexplicable presentness, a refusal to die'. He came to associate her with Ann Lee, founder of the Shakers, whom he has long admired.

The two elements fused to create the inspiration for this novel, which imagines the events and the milieu which led to and surrounded the birth of Ann Lee. Fowles insists that he has not written a historical novel — 'it is maggot' — in the sense that it is in any way biographically about Ann Lee herself, and we must accept that. But he has written, in the truest sense, a historical novel which portrays the ethos of the age and the souls of its inhabitants with exquisite care.

The story is developed in the form of an investigation by the agent of a great lord into the mysterious disappearance of the lord's son and the equally mysterious discovery of that son's devoted servant, a deaf mute who appears to have hanged himself, except that he has a clump of violets in his mouth. The young lord has embarked on a journey with a supernatural purpose, into an obscure part of Devon, travelling incognito with an actor whom he has hired to act the part of his sober uncle, another actor of the *bragadoccio* type as a bodyguard and a prostitute famous for her ability to play the reluctant virgin who pretends to be a lady's maid. None of his companions knows the real reason for the journey.

To tell more would be to give away too much and spoil for the reader the unravelling of the mystery, the solution to which has such a profound bearing on our understanding of ourselves and our own time. With the strongest possible recommendation to read this book, therefore, I leave you with one of Fowles's provocative conclusions:

> In so much else we have developed immeasurably from the eighteenth century; with their central plain question — what morality justifies the flagrant injustice and inequality of human society? — we have not progressed one inch. . .A species cannot fill its living space to absurd excess in number; and still so exalt success, the extreme, non-mediocrity, in the individual. When excess becomes synonymous with success, a society is doomed, by far more than Christ.

With **Blood Libels** Clive Sinclair bids fair to become the English Joseph Heller, except that his Jewishness is much less accessible than the American's — more specific, more parochial. Jake Silkstone, novelist and literary editor of the *Jewish Voice*, shows how his life is inextricably and comically related to the history of modern Israel. Lively and engaging though this novel is, one cannot help but feel that the guilt/sex/responsibility theme in the Jewish novel is pretty much played out, even when, as here, it is tied in with the burning questions raised by Israeli involvement in the Lebanon.

On the other hand, it seems mighty presumptuous to accuse Mr Sinclair of harping on well-worn themes in view of three of the other novels in this batch. **Bunter Sahib** might have been written by a computer which has been fed the Flashman novels and the Frank Richards stories. Enough said. **Lucia in Wartime** is another out-of-copyright follow-through that tries too hard and has not the wonderful subtlety of total commitment that characterised E.F. Benson's great originals. **But for Bunter** is a better effort altogether, but it still suffers from South Ken syndrome: the assumption that superficially sophisticated sexual relationships are as interesting to the onlooker as they are to the participants. Still it has an amusing idea at the core: the Bunter philosophy as an answer to enforced leisure.

The Conversations of Cow is a pleasant, pointless little book with a Sixties feel to it: fabulous conversations between 'an average middle-of-the-road lesbian separatist' and a Brahmin lesbian cow. It's probably saying something about sexual roles and the nature of love, but not a lot.... **Annie John** is an evocative idyll of childhood and budding womanhood in Antigua with a sad subtext about the mother-daughter relationship: the mutual, inevitable betrayals that occur when the daughter reaches puberty.

Nothing in this lot to cheer you up, but Fowles at least will make you think. □

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Shorter reviews

The Second Superpower: The Arms Race and the Soviet Union
ed. GERARD HOLDEN *CND* £2.50
Nuclear Winter
OWEN GREENE, IAN PERCIVAL and IRENE RIDGE
Polity Press £15 & £4.95

Since this collection of specially written essays will be taken as 'CND's position on the Soviets', **The Second Superpower** has some political importance, though few *NS* readers will be surprised by its general drift — that the USSR, while by no means the unambiguously 'peace-loving' nation of World Peace Council claims, tends to act defensively rather than expansively and harbours no discernible aim of invading western Europe. Giving some historical perspective as well as current data, the book counters simplistic public stereotypes without falling into opposite simplifications.

Insofar as it's directed inwards, at the movement's own activities, there can never have been any thought that the book would please everyone. My guess is that it will affront the pro-Soviet factions, and may — more positively — get CND's ordinary members to think critically about the USSR, which many of them are reluctant to do. However, it does seem evasive about relations with Warsaw Pact peace activists and about the connections between democratic liberties and peace campaigning, issues that require a chapter to themselves rather than a scatter of passing comments. As Vaclav Havel insists in the current *END Journal*, if few Czech protesters blockade missile bases 'over there', that is perhaps because they could expect 'fourteen cruel years in Valdice, our Czech Sing-Sing' as punishment. CND, and other western disarmament movements, have a heavy responsibility not to convey 'the wholly erroneous impression that the only dangerous weapons are those surrounded by encampments of demonstrators'.

Science, said Einstein, is easier than politics: and the largely technical argument of **Nuclear Winter** is in that sense straightforward, as is its conclusion that 'the ultimate cost of nuclear war could be human extinction'. Only a fellow-scientist could give an expert judgment on the book (whose authors are scrupulous in acknowledging the uncertainties in their scenarios), but this is clearly a valuable guide to the nuclear winter hypothesis and the strategic and political conclusions to be drawn.

M. H. Ryle

Women's Images of Men
ed. S. KENT and J. MORREAU
Writers & Readers £12.95

This is the book of the exhibition that attracted record attendances at London's ICA and galleries around the country back in 1980. Disgusted critics, raised in the male white tradition of art, failed to appreciate the unfashionably figurative and freely eclectic nature of what they saw. But the passion behind the criticism suggests something more than a few scruples about style. For the first time, the traditional relationship between the artist and his model was reversed. The whole notion of masculinity was being challenged by the way these women contrasted the private and the public persona of Man. Radical feminists were equally affronted. For them the only subject uncontaminated by patriarchal conditioning is a theoretical deconstruction of women's oppression.

The book puts these issues into a context of history, theory and personal experience. It celebrates the role of women artists in restoring interest and urgency to modern art and is optimistic that changing attitudes will encourage an understanding of women's imagery and techniques. Performance art is shown to be a powerful agent of change. The only flaw in this collection of articles and interviews is a didactic essay on the erotic male nude, which fails to escape from the traditional opposition of male and female qualities in its search for a female version of pornography. It certainly offers a welcome impetus to self exploration, but no one can regiment the muddle of fantasies that arises from everyone's dissatisfaction with the mundane facts of life. It is the personal not the shared aspect of such inner thoughts that makes worthwhile art, and the candour of all these women is attracting an ever increasing audience.

Clare Rendell

Crowded Hours
ERIC ROLL *Faber* £15

Central Europeans have had a special place in the management of the British economy and welfare system since 1945. Within a remarkably short period of their arrival, a number of exiled economists and social philosophers seemed to secure firm footholds in both the academic world and Whitehall. With the notable exception of Keynes, the British have themselves produced few comparable cases outside the exigencies of war. Upon retirement, the very senior civil servant may just occasionally accept the mastership of a college, or whatever. But even more rarely has a distinguished academic made a conscious decision permanently to abandon the campus or cloister for the real corridors of power. Brought up in a very different tradition of public service, economists such as Nicky Kaldor and Thomas Balogh felt no hesitation in accepting advisory posts in the first Wilson administration's abortive planning initiative, the Department of Economic Affairs.

Less in the public eye, and yet at the very heart of central government for nearly three decades, was their Permanent Secretary at the DEA, Eric Roll. Another Austro-Hungarian by birth, he briefly found himself a Rumanian in the aftermath of the First World War. A degree in engineering, and later a chair at Hull in economics, ensured the future Lord Roll's firm attachment to his adopted homeland. In May 1941 he became a civil servant, with day-to-day responsibilities in Washington for trans-Atlantic food supplies and Lend-Lease. Permanently abandoning an academic career for public administration, after the war Roll secured a series of key appointments negotiating and implementing the Marshall Plan. He was intimately involved in the policy formulation surrounding NATO's establishment in 1949, and the British decision a year later not to join the ECSC. His persistent advocacy of integration, and his continued acquaintance with all the leading figures in the Six, ensured him a major role in Harold Macmillan's forlorn attempt to join the EEC.

Roll's subsequent involvement with the DEA granted him a second insight into how Labour governments can set out with great intentions to impose a rational model of economic planning, and all too soon be reduced to a perpetual exercise in crisis management. Upon retirement he entered the City. It is a pity that a man who has crammed so much into his public life should have written such a dry volume. As a textbook on government it is admirable; as a record of a life it is deadly dull.

Adrian Smith

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BY KEVIN DURKIN

The author assembles and evaluates recent research on television sex role stereotyping and its relationship to sex role development in children.

October 1985 *c. 160pp* *0 335 15068 3* *Paper c. £6.95*
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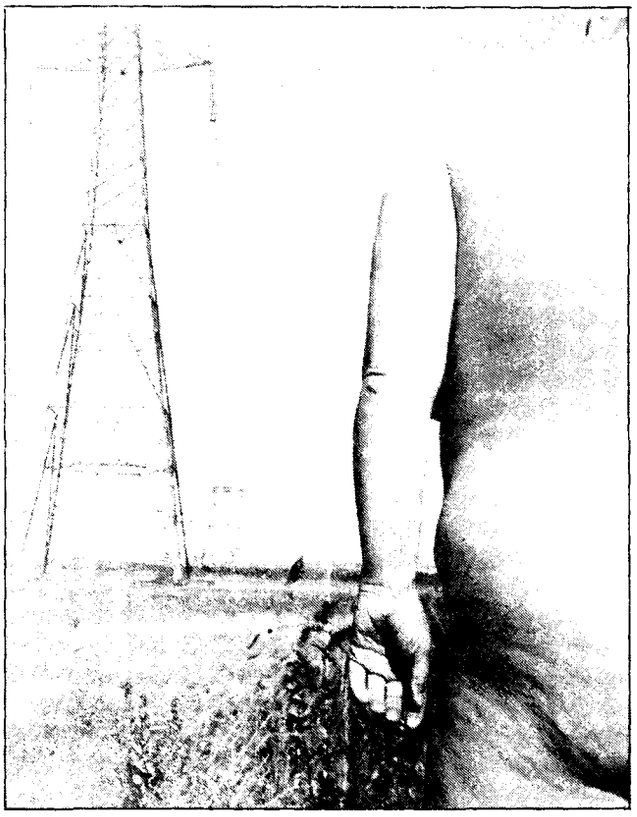
PHOTOGRAPHY

Self-portraits through a fresh-eye lens

Liz Heron

Jo Spence Review of Work 1950-1985
Battersea Arts Centre until 25 Sept; Triangle Gallery, Birmingham, October



Images from 'Remodelling Photo History' (right) and 'The Picture of Health?' (below)

FOR MORE THAN a decade Jo Spence has been waging guerrilla warfare against the photographic establishment and the mass-media image factories. Photographer turned photo-activist, she has used the camera to challenge the ways in which its all-pervasive images refract class and sexual hierarchies and define our view of ourselves in the world.

Working in collaboration with many individuals and collectives, her energy and enthusiasm made her one of the moving spirits behind some of the radical initiatives in the Seventies photography boom — as one half of Photography Workshop; founder member of Camerawork; peripatetic polemicist and lecturer. In the more generous funding climate of those days, the art schools opened their doors to the breeze of change; these days, reinstated utilitarian values see to it that the student who questions commercial aspirations is almost certainly unwelcome. Yet the influences have been durable and far-reaching and, if the gallery circuit is any indication, there's still a grateful audience for work like Jo Spence's among photographic students.

The most powerful and resonant aspects of this exhibition are those which Jo Spence herself recognises mean most to her, in the context of both recent history and personal biography. In the wake of a cancer diagnosis her focus moved inwards, compelling her to acknowledge the longstanding importance of her preoccupation with identity and self-image, with family mythologies and the frozen memories of childhood.

At the core of this avowed obsession is 'Beyond the Family Album', a photo-frieze that flows forward from the infant Jo Spence to the middle-aged woman. Subtitling it 'private images: public conventions', she explores through her commentary some of the gaps and absences in the knowledge vouchsafed by the conventional visual record of a life; searching for the fears and insecurities behind the face of the wistfully cheeky child evacuee or the pert 20-year-old vamp.

This concern with identity has its strongest continuity in the two current projects, 'The Picture of Health?', a collaboration with Maggie Murray, and 'Phototherapy'. The first documents her experience as a cancer patient; the second is a joint sequence with another photographer through which they enact the emotions and fantasies stirred by memories of childhood.

A sense of losing identity must surely be one of the attendant fears induced by a threatening illness such as cancer. That the concern can prove a source of restorative self-definition in the face of this is equally suggested by a piece in the current issue of *Granta*: Dorothea Lynch's compelling record of her cancer treatment, accompanied by her lover's photographic document of her experiences. The photographs here, as in 'The Picture of Health?', are less hostages to memory than talismans for the present, guaranteeing self-recognition and self-love. As Jo Spence has so insistently observed, the public conventions of photography function against acceptance of self, particularly where women are concerned.

She began her own photographic career as a high-street portraitist in the Sixties and her retrospective insights into the creation of the photographic fictions that were her stock-in-trade — idealised family and wedding groups; sentimental kiddy pictures; actors' publicity shots — informed later critical work and analytical projects. Some of these sequences have a ragged, unfinished feel; an idea has been seized on, consumed in a burst of images, then abandoned for another. The professional gloss, too, has been quite ruthlessly rubbed off with the years and the commitment to inquiry and deconstruction.

Yet what is tentative and fragmentary here is also stimulating. Process counts for more than completion and this reflects the latent concerns

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with the social and personal conjunctions of identity. In making these more and more explicit, rather than placing her own body as a metaphorical figure in a social landscape, Jo Spence has reached the most interesting phase of her work. As she herself says:

> The usual construction of a portrait and its use . . . is invariably for someone else. We hardly ever think to get a portrait done for ourselves, and even if we did then so much self-censorship would be involved that it would make impossible (and therefore render invisible) anything controversial. . .

There is a paradox in her denial of the photograph's mystery together with her recognition of its infinite potential. I hope it will continue to be a fruitful one. □

Battersea Arts Centre (01-228 5771) hosts an open debate on the exhibition with Jo Spence, Maggie Murray, Ros Coward and Karen Alexanda at 2pm on 21 September.

ART

Peace and quiet

John Spurling

Upon Reflection
Elthorne Park, Hornsey Rise, London N19
Gwen John: An Interior Life
Barbican, until 3 November, then Manchester and New Haven, USA
Roderic O'Conor
Barbican, until 3 November, then Belfast, Dublin, Manchester

KEVIN ATHERTON's *Three Bronze Deck-chairs,* sited in Kensington Gardens near the Serpentine, was one of the memorable pieces in the Arts Council's 1983 Sculpture Show. Exact reproductions of real deck-chairs (except that they were obviously made of bronze not wood and canvas and were painfully uncomfortable to sit on), they satisfied the customer's desire for an art that reflects the appearance of reality at the same time as guying art's pretensions to fulfil that desire.

Upon Reflection, Atherton's winning entry for Islington's Peace Sculpture competition, is a bronze statue of himself standing on the edge of a rectangular pool in the Philip Noel-Baker Peace Garden and contemplating his own bronze reflection set just below the surface of the water. The statue is a life-cast and uncannily like its maker, except that its surface is black and grimy, as if he had just come down a chimney and rolled on the floor of a busy garage; the reflection, however — a group of abstract shapes assembled into the vague outline of a man — is polished and, when the sun shines on it, casts a light on to the statue's face.

The small gathering that attended the unveiling ceremony last Sunday was perhaps slightly disappointed when Monsignor Bruce Kent pulled the string that took the sheet off: was this not a little too personal, even egotistical? Was it sufficiently symbolic of Peace (meaning, in this context, nuclear disarmament in particular)? Not at first sight. But its flavour emerges gradually: it is a witty, unsentimental and essentially modest solution to a difficult commission, which might have been expected to call forth the abstractly grandiose or the simplistically emotional. Elthorne Park, at the junction of Beaumont Rise with Hornsey Rise in Islington, is a smallish green space and the newly-created Peace Garden at its centre is a quiet plot of brick walls, flower-beds and water, so that the notion of an individual becoming gently aware of the mere fact of his own presence and continued existence is already implicit in the garden's design.

To this Atherton adds the helplessness and self-absorption of the artist faced with

Gwen John's 'The Student' (detail)

expressing in permanent and universally comprehensible form a welter of realities, assumptions and aspirations, symbolised on this occasion by the inaugural gathering itself: officials from the Borough, the Arts Council, Greater London Arts and M.J. Cagney Ltd, who financed it, press photographers, members of CND and uncommitted bystanders. Why did Islington want a work of art in its Peace Garden? Obviously, to allude, with the flowers and the water, to the virtues of peace. What are the virtues of peace? One of them is the creation and enjoyment of works of art. Atherton's *Upon Reflection* casts many reflections, including the ugly one of vandalism. Five cherry trees, planted on the garden's small lawn to commemorate the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, have already been torn up. If the solitary vulnerability of the bronze artist and his shadow invites the same fate, it only suggests the more trenchantly that that too has to be taken into account in any conception, let alone achievement, of peace: the indifference or even animosity felt by some towards the peaceful aspirations of others.

As Augustus John's reputation has declined, so his elder sister Gwen's has risen. Not that he undervalued her himself. As early as 1903, when, aged 25 and 27 respectively, they shared a show in London, he said 'Gwen has the honours, or *should* have. . . The little pictures to me are almost painfully charged with feeling.'

Gwen John studied with Whistler in Paris and, although she eventually lightened her colours and flattened her space as a concession to the 20th century, his insistence on the importance of tone chimed with her instinct for going into a face or the corner of a room, instead of bringing it out to meet the viewer. The intimacy and isolation that her slightly younger contemporary Giorgio Morandi expressed in still-life after still-life of empty bottles she pursued more overtly through small, still, half-length portraits of herself and a few female models, in which the faces seem to retreat from contact or even converse with the world and only the hands, clasped or awkwardly dangling, suggest a residue of restless energy. Almost the only male portrait in the show is a drawing of Arthur Symons and his preternaturally large hand is placed as a shield across half his profile. The sense of gloom and withdrawal is over-emphasised by the way the exhibition is hung, each small dark intimacy lost in a great white space, so that the drawings, even those of back views in church and especially those of uninhibitedly outward-looking cats, which are displayed in mutually supporting groups, make a livelier impression.

It is a relief to walk upstairs and plunge into the colourfully splashy world of **Roderic O'Conor**, an Irishman 16 years older than Gwen John who, like her, went to France to study and remained there for the rest of his life. O'Conor too seems to have been a reticent and crustaceous person and Roy Johnston, the selector of the show and author of the catalogue, has evidently had a hard job gleaning facts about his life. O'Conor's prime master was Gauguin, though at various times he leaned also on Monet, Van Gogh and Bonnard, and his best work was done in the Nineties, though he lived till 1940. Matthew Smith admired and learnt from him, but O'Conor's generally crude way with colours and his only intermittent flashes of originality soon send one back with renewed appreciation to the reluctant company of the lonely ladies downstairs. The contrast of extroversion and introversion between the two exhibitions was a good idea, but it seems a pity that the opportunity wasn't taken to give the upper gallery to Augustus John. □

The catalogue of Gwen John: An Interior Life *is published by Phaidon at £15.95*

FILMS

Mother courage

John Coleman

The Official Version (15)
Curzon, Shaftesbury Avenue
Queen Kelly (PG)
Everyman
The Holcroft Covenant (15)
Cinecenta; ABC, Edgware Road
Code of Silence (18)
Classics, Haymarket, Oxford Street and Chelsea; Odeon, Kensington

BUENOS AIRES, 1983, and the aftermath of the Malvinas fiasco is bringing disaffection with the regime to a head. But middle-aged

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Alicia (Norma Aleandro), apparently blessed in a comfortable marriage to businessman Roberto (Hector Alterio) and a bouncy five-year-old daughter Gabi (Analia Castro), introduces herself to a lounging class of youths in no-nonsense style: she will be teaching them Argentine history from 1810 by the book and is a stern marker. She calls the roll as if on the alert for trouble makers. Back home, things look rosy as she baths young Gabi and her husband affectionately turns up with a huge doll.

Luis Puenzo's **The Official Version** then proceeds, with persuasive assurance, to dismantle the woman's ostrichism and, in so doing, to portray an Argentina at war with itself. For little Gabi has been adopted and Alicia is rapidly drawn into the pain and the pity of the *desaparecidos* (the 'missing ones') and the activities of the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza del Mayo: she feels compelled to discover whether her daughter might not, in fact, be the child of parents victimised by the security forces during the mid-to-late Seventies.

A bitchy remark at a party has ruffled her, but what really triggers her off is an astonishingly written and played scene with an old chum Ana (Chunchuna Villafane), returned after seven years in political exile. Tipsy giggling over eggnog and old reminiscences late at night shift horrendously into Ana's at first matter-of-fact account of how she was hauled from her apartment, stripped naked and tortured for information about a two-year-gone lover. Details tumble out — electric prods, pails of water ('I'm still drowning') and the threat of rape (a smiling interrogator who said, 'I'm going to keep you for myself'). At this last memory, tears come as Ana admits she is terrified the man will one day materialise and claim her.

She also, crucially for Alicia, talks of pregnant young prisoners whose babies 'went elsewhere'. Under questioning, Roberto is evasive about Gabi's provenance; in confessional, a priest callously overrides Alicia's new torment; it is only while vainly pursuing records at a hospital that she makes useful contact with a 'Grandmother', which is — eventually — to lead her to her adopted daughter's true grandmother.

Alicia's *via dolorosa* encompasses stages of political awakening, often reluctant: a clash with her students, and one in particular, on whose behalf a male prof intercedes and to whom she later gives a high mark; a patio lunch with her husband's radical family at which tempers flare ('Anarchist shit,' shouts Roberto, his corrupt business dealings — as Alicia now recognises — under threat); sightings of those Plaza del Mayo rallies; a final coming to blows with Roberto and a walk-out. Nothing is resolved but a conscience-torn plenty is communicated. As the suffering wife, Norma Aleandro (who herself was forced to quit her homeland from 1978-81) stands out in a fine cast.

There are moments in the 'newly restored' version of Erich von Stroheim's silent 1928 fantasia **Queen Kelly** when Gloria Swanson, as the convent girl of the title who famously loses her knickers while a Middle European prince rides by, is almost upstaged by Seena Owen's flamboyantly erotic and whip-wielding local monarch, all Veronal, ostrich feathers and

Alicia (Norma Aleandro) confronting the truth behind *The Official Version*

slinky whims of iron; but not many. This is the one that finished Stroheim as a director; as originally scripted, it would have run for over five hours; Swanson herself put out a version that ran 74 minutes and ended with love-for-a-night Kelly's suicide. Here titles, stills and scraps of found footage scamperingly (yet lingeringly) give a rough notion of how Stroheim meant it to come out, with Kelly's rescue from a watery grave, despatch to Dar-es-Salaam and a dying aunt who proves to be a brothel-keeper, marriage over aunt's death-bed to a drooling cripple, rise to become a still-virginal madam and ultimate rescue by that wet prince to authentic queendom back in orange-blossom Kronberg.

This is clearly an event for film-buffs but will you believe me if I add that those anywhere who still enjoy good cinema should find enough passages of surrealist greatness here to make a visit mandatory? Stroheim's lavishly appointed and brilliantly lit Ruritania is for grown-ups, Krafft-Ebing engagingly salted with boisterous humour; Swanson is marvellously versatile, whether in amorously swooning or cheekily grinning close-up; and the macabre East African sequences — with Kelly being rigged out by two members of 'the horizontal profession' (title) as a bride, complete with mosquito-netting veil, for a spider-like groom on crutches — are out of a very superior nightmare.

Forget that John Frankenheimer once made *The Manchurian Candidate*. His **The Holcroft Covenant,** scripted from a Robert Ludlum thriller by George Axelrod, Edward Anhalt and John Hopkins (*what?*), breaks long-held records for badness. Michael Caine, an American architect, stars as one of a trio of sons of Hitler-bunker generals who left what is now 4½ billion dollars to be spent on making amends for Nazism. Or is it? Good secret meeting places are Trafalgar Square, a Genevan ferryboat and the Brandenburg Gate; likely lines include 'My love — my sister — my spouse' and a catatonic Victoria Tennant's spy-wise 'Part of What we Call the Drill'. Now and then, for menace, the camera actually *tilts,* bless it. Chuck Norris hulks through **Code of Silence** as super-cop in Chicago, killing some hundreds of warring gangsters damn near single-handed. Certainly the director's no help. □

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Birdy Eloquent images, inspired technique, skin-tight performances give brave lift-off to allegory-flecked adventures in blue-collar Philly of ornithological obsessive (Matthew Modine) and butch buddy (Nicolas Cage), later traumatised by Vietnam. Alan Parker's most sympathetic venture since *Bugsy.*

The Purple Rose of Cairo Woody Allen's brilliantly faceted, sad-funny fantasy, as relevant to our depressed Eighties as its Depression Thirties. Actor in idiot flick descends from New Jersey screen briefly to woo movie-mad, downtrodden housewife, making chaos and whoopee. (Mia Farrow, Jeff Daniels).

Witness Australian director Peter Weir in fine-tuned control of offbeat US thriller. Rugged but honest city policeman (Harrison Ford), grudgingly harboured from bent colleagues by time-warp Amish farmers, shares unconsummated love with Kelly McGillis's superb widow until the inevitable, estranging shoot-out.

THEATRE

Now is the time

Benedict Nightingale

Amandla!
Riverside, and on tour
Light up the Sky
MOSS HART *Old Vic*
The Real Inspector Hound
TOM STOPPARD *National*
The Critic
SHERIDAN *National*

WHAT SHOULD BE the prime object of our deliberations this week — the theatre and theatre criticism, each of which is being ebulliently satirised at posh addresses around town, or the commodity with which they'd both claim ultimately to deal, reality itself? After an evening at Riverside, there's little doubt in my mind.

It is of course difficult to know whether South Africa has arrived at its 1917 or simply at its 1905; but it's getting equally difficult to doubt the inevitability of radical change in the primaeval part of the dark continent. That being so, **Amandla!** is in at least one major respect more important than *Woze Albert!, Sizwe Bansi Is Dead* and all the other attacks on white supremacy that have been imported into this country in recent years. It's presented by the cultural wing of South Africa's government-in-exile and (let's hope) government-to-be, the

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African National Congress.

Its first tour of Britain is a political act in itself. That's most obvious when its members are repeating Nelson Mandela's words of ringing defiance, or chanting their own slogans ('Come let us claim, in solemn voice, the people shall govern!'), or enacting scenes from Soweto and the other townships. Policemen strut through the streets, hurling to the ground even those who produce their passbooks; women tumble across the stage clutching their belongings, to the sound of the dogs that have chased them from their homes and the bulldozers that are destroying them; a group of protesting schoolchildren is attacked with machine-guns and one of their number is killed.

To those tempted to complain that this is mere agitprop, simple and direct, there are several answers. At times of crisis, and especially when the rights and wrongs of the conflict are as unambiguous and undiluted as in South Africa, there is always a case for theatre that does not shilly-shally, does not nitpick, does not argue or debate, does not do any of those things a more morally intricate situation might demand, but bangs across clear beliefs with a missionary fervour. Also, the surface message of *Amandla!* is by no means its only one, nor does the performers' fierce evangelism begin to represent the limits of either their abilities or their significance.

They start with an evocation of South African village life before the arrival of the white slavers, treasure-hunters and land-grabbers — chiefs, warriors, children playing, women pounding millet — and they end with a series of traditional dances, each more exotic than the last. In between we hear song after song that's rich in melody and harmonic complexity and we see plenty that's acrobatic, rhythmic, graceful and vigorous done with legs, arms and twisting, heaving torsos; and gradually we realise that it all adds up to a political statement as potent as, and certainly more positive than, any denunciation of apartheid or exposure of police atrocity. These people have a history, they have an identity, they have a culture. They have skill and resource and energy and sophistication and capacity for joy and, as we're reminded when artistic director Jonas Gwangwa comes out to play jazz on his trombone, openness to the world outside. They have all that, and a political leadership of rare integrity, courage and maturity. How can, how *dare* anyone deny them their basic human rights in their own land?

Elsewhere, it turned out to be a surprisingly narcissistic sort of week, with the theatre contemplating itself and its critical parasites with emotions varying from wry amusement to relish and even rapture. Certainly, Moss Hart's **Light up the Sky** isn't the scathing satire — blowtorch to all that showbiz gilt — it sometimes seems to want to be. Act One presents us with producer, director and leading actress fulsomely toasting the Broadway play they're opening in Boston, and its callow young author making his guileless obeisances to their self-sacrificial devotion to art. Act Two, in which predictably savage recriminations predictably follow a predictably grim first performance, undercuts both their moral pretensions and his naivety; and Act Three is scarcely less predictable, consisting as it does of the revival of everyone's hopes with the

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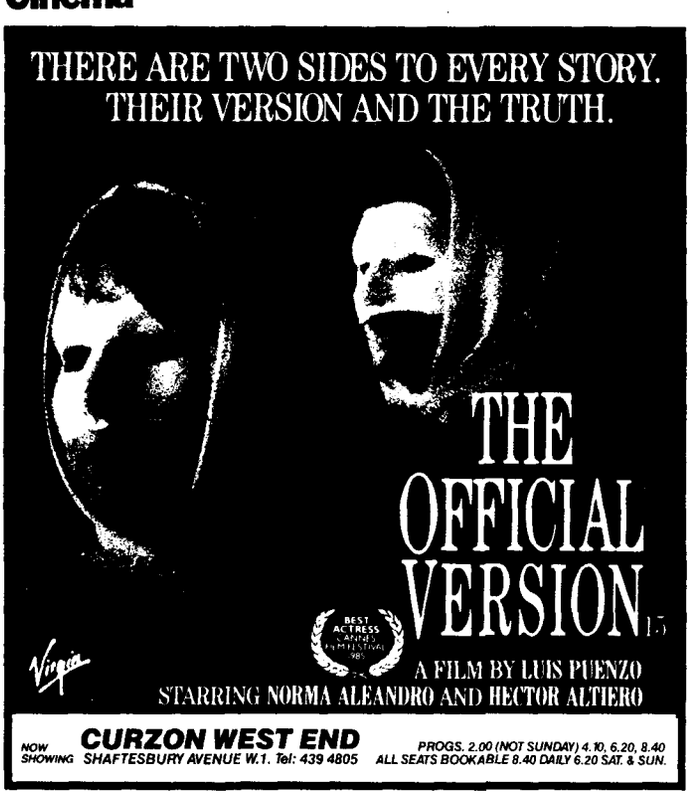
HALF MOON THEATRE 213 Mile End Road. 01-790 4000. Eves 8pm, **James Bolam** in **CHEAPSIDE** by David Allen — transfer from Croydon Warehouse. From £2.80 + concs.

Literary

SHAW SOCIETY. T.F. Evans on **'In Good King Charles's Golden Days'**, Friday 27 September. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Coffee 6.30pm, meeting 7pm.

Cinema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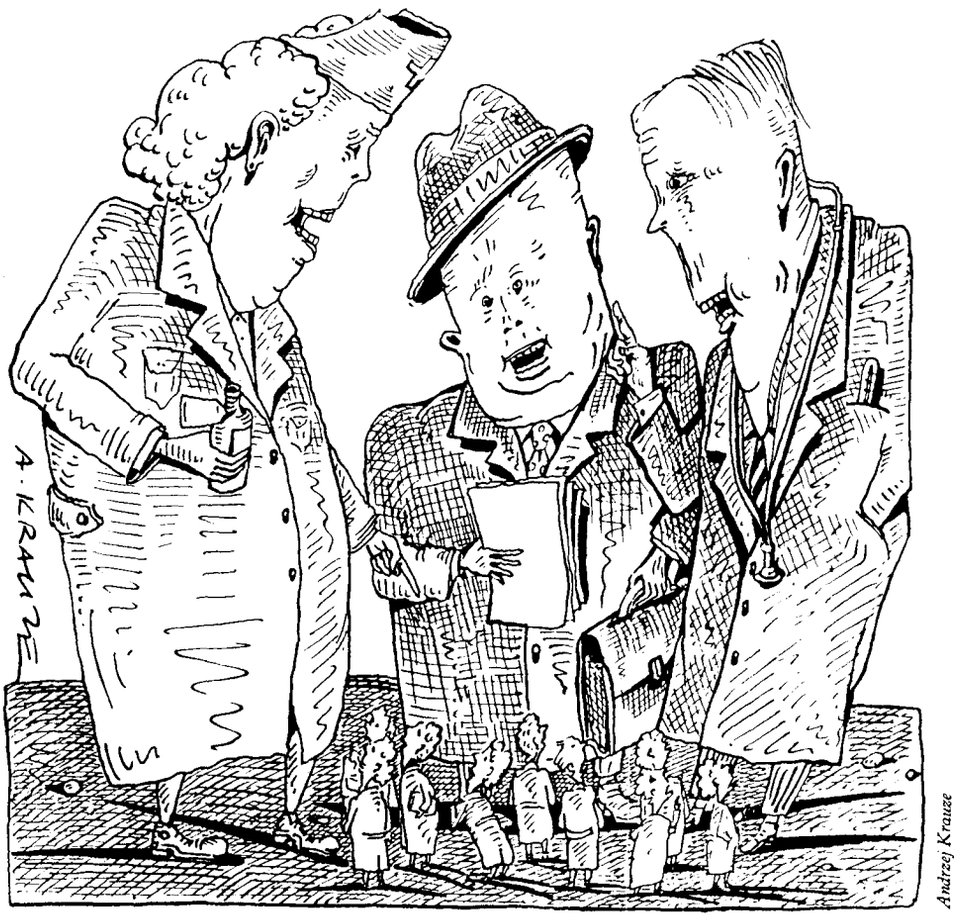
publication of notices only a little less enthusiastic than those of Shaw for Ibsen or Tynan for Brecht.

The disillusioned playwright looks for a moment as if he might spoil a thoroughly sentimental ending by rejecting the commercial stage for some more honourable calling, but of course he doesn't. After all, a hit is a hit — and don't the warts beneath the glitz make theatre people more lovable, not less?

Of course, that needn't altogether matter. It needn't even matter that the characterisation is largely cliché, or that Hart is shamelessly opportunistic in his attitude to the play-within-the-play, regarding it as either a work of poetry and originality or a piece of infantile ineptitude, depending on the passing needs of his plot. We'd forgive all that if *Light* were amusingly written and performed, which it intermittently but too intermittently is. The script can't quite sustain the cynical snap and crackle it achieves at moments; and Keith Hack's production, with Hannah Gordon's matinée queen exorbitantly posturing and Kate O'Mara making a brassy broad too broad and brassy by half and only Robert Morse's brutal-mawkish producer a solid creation, courts the audience's laughter with the kind of strenuousness that tends to dry it up. Still, there's one superlatively funny passage — Robert Stephens, alternately wan and steely as the director, proposing a lachrymose toast to the cleaning-woman he saw surreptitiously watching a rehearsal from the back of the circle. Little does he know that this 'shapeless dirty old harridan, this hapless bag of bones who had discovered beauty' was actually the leading lady's mother, disguised for easier access to a closed theatre; and she's sitting beside him now, no more appreciating his homage than she did the play.

This was first produced in 1948, **The Real Inspector Hound** in 1968, **The Critic** in 1779. Why, I wonder, do they all seem about as dated as each other? In the case of the Stoppard, I suppose, because it spends so much energy parodying a form, the laboured and ludicrous whodunnit, that now looks and sounds quite as antiquated as the neo-classical tragedies that so diverted Sheridan. The two watching critics, Edward Petherbridge pretentiously groping for sub-texts and Roy Kinnear lubriciously eyeing the women onstage, are the best of the evening; it's what they're interminably watching that's the problem, doubly so given the unsuitably huge acreage of the Olivier stage. Stoppard himself directs, with little of the invention and panache one associates with that name.

Invention and panache are, however, to be found in perhaps over-generous helpings in Sheila Hancock's staging of *The Critic*. We don't get much subtlety of characterisation — *pace* Ian McKellen's Puff, prototype of the modern PR-man, who smiles and capers and seems wonderfully invulnerable throughout — but we do get plenty of hilarious elaboration of Sheridan's already exuberant mockery of *The Spanish Armada*. Fun is had, and legitimately enough had, at the expense of a knight trapped in the tin can of his armour, of a romantic Iberian prisoner's eccentric sibilants and clanking chains, and even of the set, which sensationally collapses at the end. I laughed, as I hand't much at either Hart or *Hound*; and so, I suspect, would most of you. □



Andrzej Krauze

Cut-out angels

Jonathan Falla

I'VE JUST COMPLETED three years at an internationally-reputed centre of nursing education. I cannot recommend the education, although anyone would enjoy helping the sick feel better. My problems began before the course started; my place was vetoed by the occupational health doctor on 'unspecified medical grounds' which she couldn't divulge. These turned out to be my sex, my university degree and my age (28). Another graduate was told that she was 'potentially anorexic'. She fought her way in too.

First came the introductory school, six weeks in the classroom learning basic skills. We injected oranges and brushed each other's teeth. Our doubts grew; there can be few more ludicrous sights than a score of young adults sitting in silent rows watching a tutor solemnly soaping down a plastic dummy on a bed. Then the staff doctor returned to give us the tail-end of Matron's morality:

'Some of you will get boyfriends, I'm sure, but I just want to tell you that you don't have to say "Yes".'

The lectures began — day after day, hour after hour. Who invented the overhead projector? They should be shot. The whirring fan, the glaring screen numbed the enquiring mind, propelling us through a dilute medical syllabus as in a trance. Somebody remarked that the lecture method is the most efficient yet devised for transferring notes from the teacher's book to the students' files without passing through the brains of either. Like zombies we sat, thankful for simple instructions such as, 'You may put your pencils down now.' When the doctors came to talk about specialities we woke up a bit, but when one of them noticed a textbook on my desk and said, 'Well, you're a bright boy with a big book', I was by then too enfeebled to walk out.

There were films. In the 'paediatric module' we had one about infant nutrition — parents extolling the quality control at the Heinz factory. What followed — healthy debate, a few guarded qualifications from our tutors? No, just a pamphlet hymning a certain brand of baby's toothbrush. The students' exasperation peaked. One sat knitting a jumper in the shape of a bat, another took out her Nikon and took portrait photos of her class neighbours. We made one of the tutors cry. I'm certainly not proud of that but, as the Senior Tutor raged at us for behaving like juveniles, I wondered how it was that I'd got through four years of university without similarly regressing.

It's said that nurses are not required to think, but to experience brain-jamming in lieu of education is maddening. One colleague queried divergences between textbook and tutor (wondering which to follow with real patients), was taken aside and warned against arrogance. Another faced an enquiry for undermining Sister's authority in front of the patients — by

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pronouncing a drug name correctly. Another misguidedly remarked to a tutor that she'd actually managed to do *more* work (extra bedbaths) than instructed by the nurse in charge, and was threatened with disciplinary action.

A telegram came from Canada; a student's father was dying. She flew home in a hurry, leaving a letter for the school. On her return she was 'counselled', i.e. berated for not having asked their permission to go. This was not professional, they cried. On qualification, the student took her professional skills straight back to Canada, at once bereaved and appalled by the flagrant contradiction of everything they'd ever taught about compassionate understanding.

A 1978 Royal College of Nursing report castigated hierarchical didacticism, failures of confidence and heavy-handed discipline in counselling of students. Nightingale called nursing a fine art. What we saw was the demoralisation of intelligent adults who had voluntarily gone into vocational training, the bludgeoning of alert minds freely offered for the relief of human suffering. Most nurses desire the self-respect of a professional skill and yet constantly fail to stand up for themselves in the face of patronising doctors; hardly surprising, as they start their careers cowed by their own tutors. It is thought that 45 per cent of nurses smoke, and I heard a researcher claim that it was the strain of watching death: none of us believed her.

I have sympathy for any teacher who has to 'get through the material', a prescribed syllabus to a pre-ordained schedule. For every 'module' there was an official list of objectives and the tutors had little choice but to plough on, but when so little is absorbed that the lecture has to be repeated a year later, the system is manifestly failing. We tried to add a little leaven to the mix. We suggested visits to laboratories, to a *post mortem*. We requested a visit from *Training in Race and Health*. We did get a delightful acupuncturist. Some of us ran evening discussions with classy guest speakers on industrial radiation, psychogeriatrics, holism and racism in the NHS. Few tutors came — but I'd not do their job either; underfunded, understaffed, the internationally-reputed school is chronically short of paper. Nurse tutors have been through the mind-mangle themselves; it would be a dauntless soul who tried to change (not merely 'upgrade') that massy institution, though a few try. In the teeth of this primitive pedagogy they talk now of making the course 'more academic'.

So, now we've finished, we're qualified professionals. But 10 out of 27 in the class have dropped out and half of the remainder have declined any of the jobs the hospital offers. We just don't want to work there any more. □

This England

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcards, please.)

□The £33,000 a year was a gross salary which worked out at £1,500 a month — 'which is not what people need for living in central London.' — *Guardian* (Rachel Thomas)

Naseem Khan

Locked door

IT WAS NOT the brightest day for the British press when the case of Iqbal Jaffrey hit the headlines. You may remember it. In July this year the 47-year-old painter took the National Gallery to court when he failed to get the job of artist in residence.

'I'M NO GOLLIWOG: Black Painter's "Job Snub" Fury,' announced the *Sun*, and continued, 'Pakistan born Dr Iqal Jafreet [sic] accused the world-famous Gallery's trustees of racism'. The tone of faint derision was echoed in other pop dailies as well, while the *Telegraph*'s opening paragraph left you in no doubt as to where its sympathies lay: 'A self-proclaimed genius claiming to be equal to Leonardo da Vinci accused the Arts Minister and National Gallery of racial prejudice.' Gad sir, infernal impertinence.

Now, as you read on, you might well have begun to feel a bit dubious too. Frankly this Jaffrey fellow (or Jafreet, Jafree or Geoffrey) seemed a bit of a fruitcake. The *Telegraph* particularly printed great chunks of direct quotes from this painter, whose name was certainly not a household one, in which he claimed not only to be as great as Leonardo but also a favourite of the Queen and a genius whose mere touch could transform mundane objects into collectable works of art. Obligingly Dr Jaffrey posed brandishing a lavatory brush for delighted photographers, adding, 'In Washington someone bought an ounce of my urine for £1,000.' What to make of all this? Who is taking whom for a ride? And is it possible that the mysterious doctor was, to put it bluntly, taking the piss?

Jaffrey himself, who turned up on my doorstep the other day, was something of a surprise: not a demon joker or a megalomaniac but a reserved, unflamboyant, compact figure dressed conservatively in neat jeans, open-necked shirt and working-man's cap. He hunches over as he talks in hesitant vivid bursts, using his hands dramatically to make his impassioned points. An artist certainly of note in the Sixties ('An artist of phenomenal achievement as well as of great promise' — Herbert Read; 'Remarkable' — Norbert Lynton), he makes his living now — such as it is — as a civil rights lawyer in Chicago. He in fact left Britain some 20 years ago, scattering, if his documentation can be taken seriously, puffed wheat from the aircraft. This he called 'Flying Sculptures'. Law and art continued side by side in the States as well as, intermittently, back in Pakistan (where he drafted the Establishment of Office of Ombudsman): conceptual art including vendettas that are closely recorded. Particular object of antipathy, Alfred Beit, curator of the Museum of Modern Art, died, one might imagine, with some relief after long being harried publicly ('I drove him to the death') by Jaffrey.

A savage, kindly, unprincipled fighter for justice, he is a man, to put it mildly, of contradictions. And the Leonardo claim? He grinned a bit shamefacedly. He'd been asked with much derision by Lord Maston, the National Gallery's barrister, whether he thought he was as great as Leonardo. 'Of course I'm not. But what should I say — "Oh no, I am this humble oriental, please be nice to me." So instead I said, "All right, I am". Perhaps it was not the wisest answer but,' he went on defiantly, 'the bottom line is who's going to decide I'm not!' In the event neither tact nor discretion were the issues. The Industrial Tribunal accepted the Gallery's submission that Jaffrey's application had arrived too late and there was no case to answer.

It is, of course, not the end of the affair. On Jaffrey's side it heralds another case he intends to press, for not being appointed Ombudsman in Yorkshire. He has also applied for a job at the Industrial Tribunal. 'I think it tickles and upsets them that I don't apply for the little jobs at all.' This is a matter of principle. Asians are still considered here, he says, a race of shopkeepers, not employed anywhere at a meaningful level. Where indeed are the black artists in residence at high visibility venues like the National Gallery? His case had something more serious to it than multimillion-pound lavatory brushes. 'The blacks are denied all threshold opportunities to prove their mettle. The door is locked.'

In more sober terms, Jaffrey's concern is extended in a discussion paper written for the Arts Council by Hugh Shaw, the Council's Visual Arts Officer. A closely argued and meticulously footnoted piece, it dissects the effect of eurocentric attitudes in the arts. Including some delightful quotes — from the Balinese, for instance, who apparently have no word for 'art': 'We do not have any art, we do everything as well as possible; we do all things properly' — it has relevant things to say about different ways of seeing. 'Increasing numbers of young black English visual artists are insisting,' he says, 'that while they accept to a degree the received European visual arts "package" (painting on rectangular flat surfaces which are then put in frames and hung on walls to be viewed passively in silent, guarded rooms in buildings that were once the palaces of the rich. . .) they are looking for a visual aesthetic which is exclusive to them.' If a different style is indeed emerging, where is its outlet? In peripheral galleries, claim Britain's black artists, and ignored by the critics.

The complaint about lack of outlets for new works is, in all fairness, common to artists of all colours. What is easier to document however is Shaw's point about the way in which our national collections take so little cognizance of other than Western schools and traditions of art. Kenneth Clark's popular *Civilization*, he notes, offered no example at all of the art of India, China or Africa, with the clear implication that these did not constitute civilisation. 'Underlying...is the unstated assumption that the received European culture is the pinnacle of human achievement.' However much Iqbal Jaffrey came over as a Don Quixote, the windmills he was tilting at were very real. □

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TELEVISION

Andrew Rissik
Splurge

SO FAR AS the televising of classical drama is concerned, no one seems to have learned anything from Trevor Nunn. His studio-bound productions of *Antony and Cleopatra, Macbeth* and *The Three Sisters* were magnificently attuned to the discreet intimacy of the camera, shorn of distracting and superfluous theatrical scenery and compellingly quiet and intelligent.

Above all, they lacked conspicuously that rollicking brio, that roistering, over-delivered artificiality which is the bane of so much contemporary classical acting. Sunday night saw a television version of Terry Hands's acclaimed **Cyrano de Bergerac** sprawling flabbily across three hours on Channel Four, while Oscar Wilde's **Lady Windermere's Fan** played opposite on BBC2. Of the two, *Cyrano* was incomparably the worse.

Rostand's gilded romance has long enjoyed what seems to me to be an entirely undeserved reputation as a masterpiece of tragic pathos. Played here in a kind of solemn doggerel, its hero is a romantic swashbuckler whose physical ugliness conceals a soul of exquisite beauty and tenderness. Desperately in love with the voluptuously beautiful Roxanne, he believes himself to be too physically repellent to win her and, stoically accepting the cruelty of the world, puts his enormous linguistic panache at the disposal of the handsome but dumb Christian.

In a scene of abominable sentimentality Christian stands mute below Roxanne's window while Cyrano pours out his soul in language of luxuriant, florid excess. Taken in by this surrogate lovemaking, Roxanne admits the bland Christian to her bed while Cyrano, resignedly lovesick, guards her door. On stage at the Barbican these camp flourishes had a lingering operatic prettiness, a pictorial extravagance that made them briefly diverting. On screen the fake bluster and the warbling pseudo-poetry were left naked and ridiculous. In the whole three hours there was no single moment of emotional truth or psychological honesty.

Michael Simpson, credited with transferring this showy candyfloss to television, had little visual precision with which to capture the theatrical rhetoric and this production was coarsely and badly acted and clumsily staged. In place of Nunn's penetrating use of the close-up, and deft evocation of space and time through the simplest changes of light, shade and colour, we were given the brawling thunder of stage acting caught embarrassingly close. And Ralph Koltai's sets — which possessed an opulent grace in the theatre — looked gaudy, expensive and vulgar. It could all have been thought up by Cedric Messina, whose opening productions in the BBC's Shakespeare cycle were so extravagantly bad.

Rostand's language allows only two interpretative styles. Either it must be declaimed energetically, as an actor swings from a chandelier or whips a rascal with his sword, eking out the impression of romantic bravado with strenuous stage business, or it must be crooned with mellifluous sweetness as the lights dim and soft, plangent music drenches the audience in feigned, honeydew emotion. No production can overcome the fact that Cyrano's heady verbiage is too patly contrived to be sincere, or that Roxanne is conceited enough to equate this fast-talking hyperbole with true feeling.

Verbally, Cyrano is a Flash Harry in an Aston Martin and that protracted nose confers upon him a deceptive and spurious dignity. The shallow and stupid Roxanne, impregnably vain, refuses love unless it comes armed with monstrous flatteries. To be fair, these roles were played with flamboyant ardour by Derek Jacobi and Sinead Cusack. It is not their fault that the production made fools of them.

WITH *Lady Windermere's Fan* we are dealing with a dramatist of far greater distinction and intellectual toughness. Wilde may be frivolous and his pursuit of the disconcerting epigram sometimes grows tedious, but his is a serious, gravely humorous piece whose artifice is closer to the work of Ibsen and Shaw than to the conversational anarchy of *The Importance of Being Earnest.*

Lady Windermere's Fan is a dark comedy which deals with social hypocrisy and sexual morality and Wilde's best and most convincing characters are his women. His achievement is to depict the troublous route by which they come to recognise that men are weaker, more capricious and less resourceful than themselves, and to find some value in the secondary role which Victorian society allots to them. There are moments in *Lady Windermere's Fan* which remind us of *The Doctor's Dilemma, Mrs Warren's Profession* and *The Doll's House.* The happy compromise which ends the play is exactly the kind of thing Nora turned her back on when she left her husband. But Ibsen's revolution was to refuse to resolve the psychological contradictions that such comic contrivance requires. Wilde found the form amusing and discovered, in its inherent frustration, his own kind of truth.

Tony Smith's production was, I admit, too conventional to serve the play as finely as it demands. There was some stilted, drawing-room enunciation, several routinely overdressed sets and a rather neutral atmosphere of studio-bound Victoriana, like a ponderous episode of *Upstairs, Downstairs.* This is the gloss of classic production and I know that many viewers are tired of it. But there was, beneath it, an authentic, spiky intelligence and a compassionate sense of what the characters were up to. Helena Little's Lady Windermere was genuinely vexed and her gradual journey toward maturity was done with a still authority that lent this television version an appropriate moral focus. This, coupled with an excellent *Uncle Vanya* broadcast the same night on Radio Three, went some way toward redeeming the camp, kitsch superfluity of *Cyrano de Bergerac.* □

Weekend competition

No 2891 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Might our soap operas improve with a change of authorship? Extracts please, max. 120 words, from future episodes of *Coronation Street, The Archers, Dallas,* etc., as written by contemporary playwrights more noted for their 'serious' stage plays. Your deadline (as a generous compromise, you may, from now on, have an extra day) is Thursday 3 October.

No 2888 **Set by Jim Richardson**

Openings to newspaper editorials designed to discourage one from reading on.

Report **By Di Dact**

Very amusing, Purcell Minor, your suggestion that our original example (taken from the pages of the *Guardian*) was in fact a misprint for 'It is diverting, this week, to compare the Queen and Ronald Reagan's mother . . .' Unfortunately, your entry itself was less than totally successful. As, indeed, were most of them, the extraction of humour from tediousness being perhaps too demanding a task for minds made frivolous by long, summer hols. Three pounds each for those entries below which more or less rose to the occasion.

There is something quintessentially English and endearing about the long-standing debate whether milk should be put in the cup before or after the tea . . . GEORGE MOOR

The Classics dons of Oxbridge are showing their muscle! GERARD BENSON

Call him a self publicist, call him a saint. But you can't ignore Bob Geldof. And the *Sun* thinks its readers should know exactly where we stand. . . BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

The Times: The advocates of the rival Celsius and Fahrenheit systems of measuring temperatures should pause awhile to consider the merits of the Réaumur system . . . K. E. JERMY

Observer: We make no apology for returning once again to the question of the BBC . . . NAOMI MARKS

The Times: One example of the legendary if elliptical wit of Dr Henry Kissinger will perhaps bear repetition . . . MARTIN FAGG

Financial Times: The arguments for and against current cost accounting became more and more fascinating . . . SID FIELD

Mr Parkinson is a man who made a mistake. But the man who never made a mistake has never made anything and it is time . . . JOHN SWEETMAN

The departure of Lord Gowrie, our only published poet of cabinet rank, prompts us to reflect on the recent reshuffle in metrical form:

We had occasion to attend evensong this week for the first time in some years, and what a lamentable business it has become . . . NOEL PETTY

Robert Max . . . PAUL OSWALD

Cricket . . . ALISON PRINCE

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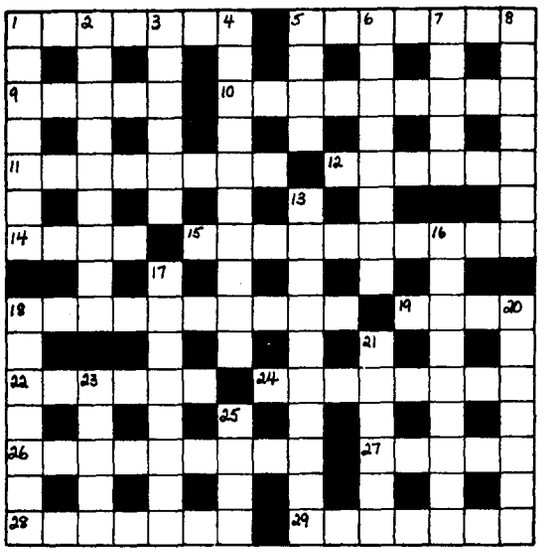
Weekend Crossword 1493

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1493, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 8 October.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

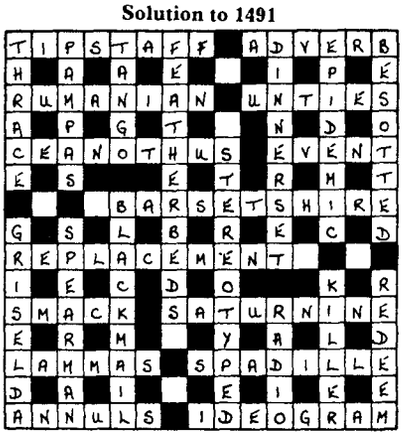
1. Shortage of revenue although one is skilful about industrial enterprise (7)
5. Father has a bad chest but mends (7)
9. An old conductor spent a morning behind this tree (5)
10. Churchman who has to study in bed (9)
11. Include a little test of skill before the end of the session (8)
12. Stick in a road he resided in long ago (6)
14. Simple for Jack (4)
15. Place for youth in the prelude to launching (6,4)
18. It is only a short distance but one spends an age in the middle (10)
19. Member makes minus centigrade ascent (4)
22. A note to one who is growing old in a defensive position (6)
24. Impractical person who makes plan appear wrecked (8)
26. Vanish, leaving a girl to talk foolishly about love (9)
27. Instruct as individuals at the beginning of term (5)
28. To make a girl get into bed is the height of one's ambition (7)
29. Return the sweet because it has got hairs on it? (7)

DOWN

1. Disaster with a vehicle overturning in the middle of it (7)
2. Member of a fraternity to liberate relatives (9)
3. Stick together with one man in the inside (6)
4. Instruments which give one room for action in manipulating steel (10)
5. Hands over the money for a foreign country (4)
6. Times which keep us steady (8)
7. Garden feature which would do for the border if the head were removed (5)
8. Make swell progress in the medical profession? (7)
13. One element in a gentleman holding a coloured one (10)
16. Unusual people who take a single drink during tests (9)
17. Old woman carries something to eat for the guide (8)
18. King holds his member in society (7)
20. Complained in an animal sort of way? (7)
21. Competition for a place (6)
23. Feast for those who have their mouths open? (5)
25. Go different ways or catch up (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1491



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PROFESSIONAL MALE, 54, platonically married seeks fun-loving female, for occasional get together — walking, dining and what have you. Cambs/Peterborough area. Box (38)1465.

REQUIRED — THE friendship (or more) of an intelligent, attractive, kind, male professional/graduate, 40s to early 50s. Life is good, but better shared. Box (38) 1461.

SENSITIVE WOMAN, 35, tall, attractive, divorced, graduate, cultural interests, living West London, seeks tall, kind, affectionate, intelligent man. Box (38)1462.

SINGLE MAN, 30, Marxist, interested in writing, humour, cinema, sport. Seeks intelligent, articulate, socialist woman with sense of humour, for stable, long-term relationship. Yorkshire. Box (36) 1388.

TWICE WED lady, seeks contemporary mate, 59 plus, needing loving, caring relationship. I'm attractive, titian haired, large build, Pisces, and leftish. Write Now: Box (38)1475.

UNIVERSITY LECTURER, 48, male, separated, radical, W. Yorks. Seeks creative friendship with woman of like orientation. Interests include: psychotherapy, peace, music, yoga, walking. Heartbeat strong despite the ice age of blue politics. Box (38)1498.

VISTA, Simply a nice way for single, separated, divorced or widowed people to meet new friends/partners. Brochure: 01-272 1414.

WOMAN, 41, attractive, own home, job, etc. Likes conversation, travel, films, countryside, needs emotionally mature man for fun and companionship. Box (38)1470.

MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Sunday 22 Sept. 8 p.m. Informal Q/A Meeting 'Culture of Concentration'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

ACCOMM. VACANT

N5: HIGHBURY tube. Academic's maisonette avail. now to rent to similar, 1 year. 2 bed., 1 study/bed., 2 bath/wcs, kit., recep. References essential. Write with phone number. Box (37)1459.

SHORT LET — Stockwell: mid Nov.-mid Jan. 3 bed. shabby, artist's house, conv. West End. 01-735 4705.

VERY ATTRACTIVE bedsit., TV, all facilities, in family house near Golders Green. Suit quiet girl. £55 per week. Tel. 01-458 8400.

THERAPY

BODYMIND/GESTALT therapist. Personal and couple problems. Christopher Scammon 01-459 4636.

PRIVATE MASSAGE/Therapy service. Tel. 01-724 4347. 11.30-6.30 Mondays to Fridays.

WORKSHOP

PSYCHODRAMA
A workshop with
SUZIE COOMBES
Brynafon Country House Hotel, Rhayader, Mid-Wales.
Fri. 6 Dec. — Sun. 8 Dec.
Residential **£53.50**, non.res. **£28**
Details: **Harry Wright, The Hazel Clinic, Temple Street, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5HF.**
APPLY BY 25 OCT

AGENDA

FOR DETAILS CALL DAVID JONES 01-251 5487

TUES 24 SEPT

HUDDERSFIELD TRADES COUNCIL commence a week of events to celebrate its centenary. Details from Melvyn Holdsworth (0484) 34052.

NICARAGUA MUST survive — Public Meeting, Jeremy Corbyn, Charlotte Cornwell speaking. Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, N7, 7.30 p.m. Finsbury Park Tube. Info. 01-809 0757.

WED 25 SEPT

A MEETING to launch two new books 'Haiti Family Business' by Rod Prince (Latin America Bureau) and 'Bitter Sugar' by Maurice Lemoine (Zed Books). There will be a showing of the award-winning film 'Bitter Cane'; speakers and refreshments. Free admission, at 6 p.m. 1 Amwell Street, London EC1. For further info 01-278 2829 or 01-837 8466.

FRI 27 SEPT

ARTHUR SCARGILL
will address the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers 7.15 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. 'British Justice — The Myth Exposed'. 50p unwaged, £1 members, £1.50 non-members. (Food/drink extra).

SUN 29 SEPT

REUNION OF RATIONALIST SOCIETIES, South Place Ethical Society 3 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. 'Those who believe absurdities will commit atrocities'.

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with the authors of the most important books on Marxism.
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1st Floor, Bloomsbury Tavern, 236 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2.
(Holborn, TCR Tubes)
DETAILS: CAPITAL READING SEMINARS
01-354 0668/01-398 4852

TUES 1 OCT

PUBLIC ENTERPRISE GROUP: Fringe Meeting, East Cliff Court Hotel, East Overcliff Drive, Bournemouth 5.30 p.m. 'The Way Back: Reconstructing the Public Sector' — speakers: Bryan Gould MP opposition spokesman on Trade & Industry, Councillor Mike Ward Chair GLC Employment & Industry Committee. Silver collection.

THURS 3 OCT

'**OPHELIA** and the Great Idea' by Deborah Levy presented by Theatre Imaginaire at Jackson's Lane Community Centre (opp. Highgate tube) at 8 p.m. Admission £2.80 (£2.50 members) plus concessions. Proceeds to Highgate CND.

SUN 6 OCT

SOUTHWARK PEACE FORUM 2-6 p.m. Speakers: James Hinton (CND), Sally Davidson (CP), Peter Tatchell (LP) and participants from Southwark Greenham Women. Questions and Workshop discussions. Creche (under 5's, please book). Disabled facilities. At Bell's Garden Community Centre, 19 Buller Close, SE15 (5 mins walk from Peckham High St.) Further information from 6 Colegrove Rd, London SE15.

TUES 8 OCT

'DOES BRITAIN NEED NUCLEAR ARMS?' A Public Debate between Bruce Kent (CND) & Timothy Kirkhope (Peace through Nato). Chr: Dr Garri Don. 7.30pm. Victoria Hall, Southborough, Kent. Org. by Tunbridge Wells CND. Details: Gordon Richards (0892) 35595.

GREEN POLITICS
10 week evening course at City of London Polytechnic, beginning 7 October, 6p.m.-8.45p.m. The course will provide a critical examination of the main areas of concern to the Green Movement and offer an appraisal of its policies and proposed political strategies. Includes a discussion of the politics of health and food in a national and international context. Details from: **The Secretary, Sociology Unit, COLP, Old Castle Street, London E1 7NT. Tel: 01-283 1030 Ex. 541.**

NEIL KINNOCK talks exclusively in this week's *Tribune* about the issues facing next week's Labour Party conference.

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Neil Kinnock

Tribune

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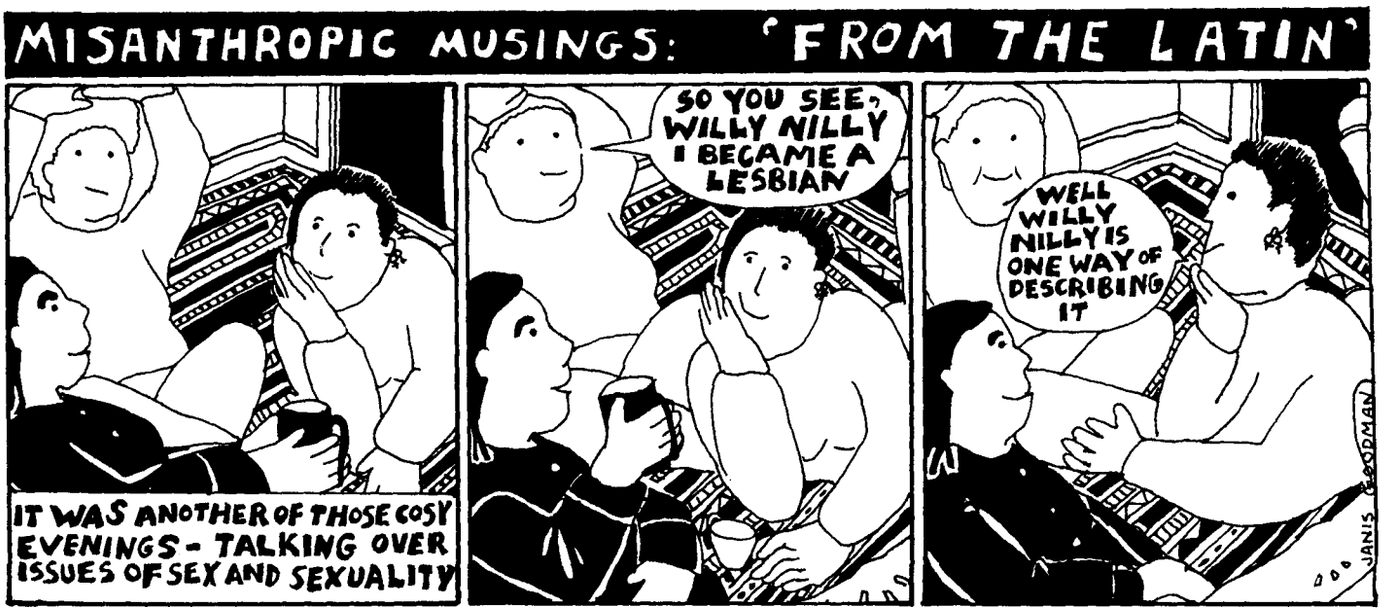

MISANTHROPIC MUSINGS: 'FROM THE LATIN'
IT WAS ANOTHER OF THOSE COSY EVENINGS - TALKING OVER ISSUES OF SEX AND SEXUALITY
SO YOU SEE, WILLY NILLY I BECAME A LESBIAN
WELL WILLY NILLY IS ONE WAY OF DESCRIBING IT
JANIS GOODMAN

CHESS

The Candidates

IT SEEMED that after Curaçao in 1962 the candidates tournament had become extinct. Yet next month in Montpellier this splendid beast will be reanimated. This particular type of tournament, however, may still be an endangered species. It was discontinued 23 years ago in response to Bobby Fischer's allegations in his notorious 'commie cheats' article. Fischer's claim was that with so many Russians in the event they were able to fix the result between themselves.

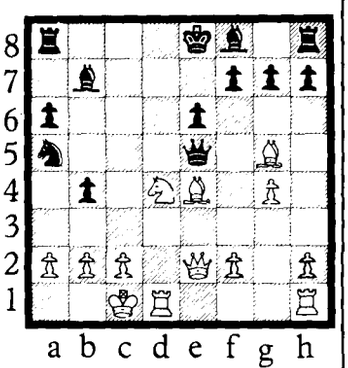
Whether Fischer's charge was justified has never really been resolved. I have always thought of it as a petulant outburst by one of the world's worst losers. Admittedly the Russian grandmasters conserved energy by agreeing short draws. But draws alone are not enough to win tournaments. A real conspiracy would require some games to be thrown. With seven of the 16 contestants in Montpellier (not counting the expatriates Korchnoi and Spassky) coming from the USSR the means for such a sporting crime are available. For the foreseeable future such events are going to be stacked with Russians. But although players quite often agree draws without a fight, there are few so patriotic or so mercenary as to countenance losing deliberately. I am confident that it would be anathema to all the current competitors.

Besides, there is not the same motive as at Curaçao. Then the winner of the candidates tournament went on directly to challenge Botvinnik, a man growing vulnerable in the twilight of a great career. The prize at stake at Montpellier is the chance to face both Kasparov and Karpov, and the general opinion amongst GMs and IMs is that only those who can derive masochistic pleasures from being crushed will find that privilege rewarding.

Beliavsky, Timman and Korchnoi may not agree. They are the players I would rate most likely to succeed in Montpellier. Perhaps Ribli and Vaganian too. And then what about Tal and Yusupov and Portisch? Maybe Spassky, who undoubtedly has the class, but in recent years has been about as ambitious as a superannuated lotus-eater, can rekindle old enthusiasms. It really is a very open contest.

Of course Montpellier will be a rather special occasion for British chess because Nigel Short will be there, the first time that a British player has reached this advanced stage of the qualifying cycle. He had a terrific struggle to get there, losing twice to van der Wiel in the play-off for the fourth place from the Biel interzonal. Realism and ratings suggest that our standard-bearer is destined for a place in the lower reaches. We can only hope that, having been billed as a child prodigy for so long, fulfilling inflated expectations will have become second nature to Nigel by now.

No doubt you worked out that in last week's position **1. f4** would not have saved the game. Black replies **1. . .g5 + 2. Kh5 Rg3 3. h4 Rh3** and White can only avert mate by surrendering his rook. Now try this position. Theory held that White was in trouble because both his bishops are under attack, but in a recent correspondence game Welsh international Paul Lamford showed that there is a very pretty combination on. White to play.



Solution

1. Nxe6! and Black shrewdly saved postage by resigning. The variations are: a) **1. . .Qxe6 2. Bf5! Qxe2 3. Bd7 mate** b) **1. . .fxe6 2. Bg6 + c) 1. . .Bxe4 2. Qxe4 Qxe4 3. Nc7 mate**, and then there is d) **1. . .Be7** (the best try), which I leave you to work out.

George Botterill

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QUIZ

1) Who, after being fired from a £43,000-a-year job recently, said: 'Many people have lost their jobs in recent years who are much worse off than I am'?
2) Who recently resigned from a job because the £33,260 salary made it 'almost impossible to finance a life in London'?
3) In which country did the President recently dissolve the government and send most ministers to work on collective farms?
4) Which former President of an African country had a bit-part in the film *Sanders of the River*, starring Paul Robeson?
5) Which current MP joined the Labour Party at the suggestion of Paul Robeson?
6) Which current MP is the son of the actress Dinah Sheridan?
7) Which minister was recently said by *The Times*, wrongly, to have been Great Uncle Bulgaria in the Wombles?
8) Which European Prime Minister recently played the part of a police constable in Feydeau's *The Haunted Hotel*?
9) Whose new novel is called *The Good Terrorist*?

Answers

1) Patrick Jenkin; 2) Lord Gowrie; 3) Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta); 4) Jomo Kenyatta; 5) Andrew Faulds; 6) Jeremy Hanley; 7) Timothy Renton; 8) Olof Palme; 9) Doris Lessing

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